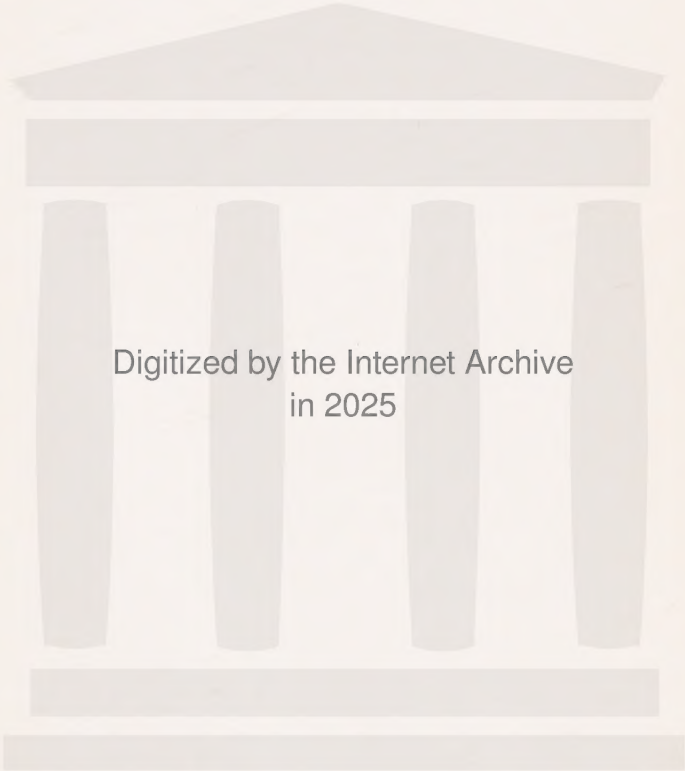
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THREE-MINUTE HOMILIES

THREE-MINUTE HOMILIES

BY
REV. MICHAEL V. McDONOUGH

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NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO
BENZIGER BROTHERS
PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE
1924

35707

Imprimi Potest.

J. M. CORRIGAN
Censor Librorum

Nihil Obstat.

✠ DENIS, CARDINAL DOUGHERTY
Archbishop of Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA, May 12, 1924

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Printed in Philadelphia, U. S. A.

PREFACE

THESE talks on the gospel are for the Low Masses, particularly in churches where those Masses follow one another rapidly on Sunday forenoon. They may also very easily be developed into the longer sermon at the High Mass, and furnish matter for it.

The complete gospel of the Sunday or Feast at the head of the page in every instance without exception, saves much time and makes the book extremely convenient for the preacher.

"Three-minute" on the title-page need not be taken literally, although a glance will show that they certainly are marvelously short. "Homilies" is used about them only in the broadest sense of that word, "commentaries on the gospel of the day."

The Alphabetical Index at the end of the work makes quick reference easy and clear. The Table of Contents at the beginning will show that every double feast of the first and second class in our calendar is included in the book, as well as the two feasts of Our Lord of lesser rite, the "Exaltation of the Holy Cross" and the "Dedication of the Basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul." All these, of course, take precedence of the Sunday Mass and Office whenever they fall on a Sunday; and some of them actually fall on Sundays six or seven times a year on the average. So for priests who like to read the *First* Gospel and preach on it the book should prove extremely useful.

With these are included just eleven feasts which would be only commemorated on a Sunday, namely: St. Gabriel, St. Raphael, the Guardian Angels, St.

Barnabas, Apostle, the "Seven Dolors" in Passion Week, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Nicholas (Santa Claus), St. Blaise, St. Patrick, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and St. Sylvester (Dec. 31st), as well as All Souls' Day.

In a book of short sermons erudition and deep study are not to be expected. However, Cornelius a Lapidé, the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Martyrology and the "Book of Saints" (by the Benedictines of Ramsgate) have been referred to quite frequently; so there is every prospect that the work will be found correct and orthodox. May it also be found useful by busy priests, and even pleasing.

M. V. McDonough.

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THREE-MINUTE HOMILIES

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves;

"Men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved;

"And then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty.

"But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand."

And He spoke to them a similitude: "See the fig tree, and all the trees:

"When they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh;

"So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand.

"Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." (Luke, XXI, 25-33.)

THIS human race, this human "generation" shall not pass away from the earth until this prophecy of our divine Saviour has been fulfilled. There will still be men and women upon this earth when the end of the world comes. There will

still be nations:—"Men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world":—"Distress of nations."—Perhaps we should thank God that our lot has been cast upon this earth now, rather than then.

And this morning, once more in our lives, it is the peaceful, blissful Advent time. This morning once more the Church of our divine Saviour is beginning *her* new year. How quickly they pass, those short years! How quickly they leave us, never to come back! "For, behold, the short years pass away, and I am walking in a path by which I shall not return." (Job. XVI, 23.) Advent, and Christmas with the Christmas time; then the weeks after Epiphany; Lent, and Easter, Ascension, Pentecost with a score and more of Sundays after it; and then another Advent.

The joyful, penitential, snow-white, purple Advent time is with us once more this morning. True, the Church wears the violet of penance, for we are all sinners, unworthy, without penance and preparation, to appear before the Babe of Bethlehem or to stand in the august presence of His Immaculate Mother and dear St. Joseph. Not only the angels of the Gloria, but even the shepherds at the manger would disown us, if we were not sorry for our sins. Yet, mingled with the contrition in our hearts is the joy of Christ, the peace of God, while Christmas is drawing near.

May the angels of God float down from heaven, with the snowflakes of Advent, to baffle the evil spirits and keep us pure and clean, even as the snow makes white the soiled and faded earth; so that in His friendship and in His grace we may prepare for the great feast of His birth, and with loving hearts and undefiled souls make ready for His coming.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to Him:

"Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?"

And Jesus making answer said to them: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen:

"The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them.

"And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me."

And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What went you out into the desert to see? A reed, shaken with the wind?

"But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments, are in the houses of kings.

"But what went you out to see? A prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

"For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee.'" (Matt., XI, 2-10.)

IN TO-DAY'S gospel our divine Lord gives public testimony concerning Himself and concerning St. John the Baptist.

About Himself He says: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen: The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again," as if answering their question, "Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?" "I am the One Who was to come, expect no other! I am the Messias. I am Christ and God." For this answer of Our Lord repeated for them substantially the prophecy which Isaias had made eight hundred years before, that the Messias would be God, and with which many of Christ's hearers on that day would be

familiar. "God Himself," said the prophet Isaias —"God Himself will come and will save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free." (Isaias, XXXV, 4-6.) By His reference to that glorious prophecy Our Lord publicly testified to them that He is God Himself.

About St. John the Baptist Our Saviour says: "This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee,'" quoting the words which the prophet Malachias wrote four hundred years before: "Behold, I send My angel and he shall prepare the way before My face." (Mal. III, 1.) St. John the Baptist, Our Saviour publicly told them, was God's angel (or messenger), sent before God's face, to prepare God's way here on this sinful earth. No reed was he, no blade of grass shaken to and fro by the wind, but a "tower of strength that stood foursquare to all the winds that blew." No soft, silky courtier, gliding about the palaces of kings, but a complete man in power and dignity. "A prophet?" Our Saviour said; "yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet." So on that day our divine Lord bore public witness to Himself as Messias and God, and to St. John the Baptist as His forerunner and herald, who had prepared the way before Him.

Hence it is, that the Church of our divine Lord gives such particular prominence to St. John the Baptist during this holy season of preparation, especially in the gospels of the Masses of the second, third and fourth Sundays of Advent. And many are the loyal children of the Church who devote a great deal of reflection, meditation and prayer to St. John the Baptist during the Holy Advent

season. May we all think of him and pray to him as much as we can; and may he intercede for every one of us!

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and levites to him to ask him: "Who art thou?"

And he confessed, and did not deny; and he confessed: "I am not the Christ."

And they asked him: "What then? Art thou Elias?" And he said: "I am not." "Art thou the prophet?" And he answered: "No."

They said therefore unto him: "Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself?"

He said: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as said the prophet Isaias."

And they that were sent were of the Pharisees.

And they asked him and said to him: "Why, then, dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet?"

John answered them, saying: "I baptize with water; but there hath stood One in the midst of you, Whom you know not.

"The same is He that shall come after me, Who is preferred before me: the latchet of Whose shoe I am not worthy to loose."

These things were done in Bethania, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. (John, I, 19-28.)

IN TO-DAY'S gospel St. John the Baptist gives public testimony, first, concerning himself and secondly, concerning Our Lord Jesus Christ.

About himself he says: "I am not the Christ." —I am not Elias nor the prophet.—"I am the voice

of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as said the prophet Isaias."

About Christ, St. John the Baptist testifies: "There hath stood One in the midst of you, Whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, Who is preferred before me: the latchet of Whose shoe I am not worthy to loose."

The very next day St. John saw Jesus approaching toward him, and at once he pointed Him out to the people, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God! Behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world! This is He, of Whom I said: 'After me there cometh a Man Who is preferred before me, because He was before me.'" (John, I, 29, 30.)

Again, on the next day after that, St. John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples and, seeing Our Saviour walking nearby, he said to them: "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John, I, 36.) Immediately his two disciples left St. John and followed Jesus.

"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John, III, 30), St. John said, shortly before he was cast into prison. "You yourselves do bear me witness that I said, 'I am not Christ,' but that I am sent before Him." (John, III, 28.) "And I saw, and I gave testimony, that this is the Son of God." (John, I, 34.) "He that cometh from above, is above all." (John, III, 31.)

All these were public utterances of St. John concerning our divine Lord. Thus he bore public witness, first, to his own smallness and lowliness, and secondly, to the infinite greatness of his God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

No wonder that we name him the Saint of the Advent season! No wonder that the gospels of Advent tell us so much about him! Next Sunday's

gospel will speak of him again. The Saint of the Advent season, the Herald of our divine Lord, his one idea was to fulfil well the wonderful mission which God had entrusted to him. He prepared himself for that mission, a hermit in the deserts from early childhood, clothed in rough camel's hair, girdled with leather, water his drink, locusts and wild honey his food. That was St. John's season of preparation, extending from early childhood into the years of manhood when he began his mission.

May he remember us in heaven and intercede for us this Advent and every Advent, this year and every year, but particularly during these coming days while Christmas is so rapidly approaching!

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina,

Under the high priests Annas and Caiphas, the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary, in the desert.

And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins,

As it was written in the Book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet: "A voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.'

"'Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways plain;

"'And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" (Luke III, 1-6.)

ST. ELIZABETH, the mother of St. John the Baptist, was a cousin of our blessed Lady, whether a first cousin or more distant we do not know. Therefore, St. John the Baptist was either a second cousin or a still more distant relative of our divine Saviour. He was only six months older than Our Lord. Three months before his birth, and nine months before the birth of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, visiting her cousin, St. Elizabeth, saluted her as she entered her home; and Elizabeth said in answer: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For, behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy." (Luke, 1, 42-44.)

Thus in this marvelous and most miraculous manner, even three months before his birth and nine months before Christ's birth, St. John the Baptist recognized his God and Saviour, and showed his joy; and thus, even then, we might say, began to prepare the way of the Lord. But it was many years afterward that he "came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins," and thus publicly and solemnly preparing the way of the Lord.

He was the Saint of the Advent time, as we often call him nowadays. He was the Angel whom God sent into the world before the face of His only-begotten Son, as Our Saviour Himself called him, and as the prophet Malachias had called him four hundred years before his birth. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, as he called himself, and as the prophet Isaias had called him eight hundred years before his times: "a voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare ye the way

of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways plain; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

How true and strong those grand words ring down to us through all the centuries, and with what an urgent appeal! "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths!" Who does not feel impelled, with Christmas drawing so near to us, to make straight His paths, to prepare His way, in our own little soul, at least! May he help us to do so, the Babe of Bethlehem, the God of Heaven! So that Christmas may be not only happy, but holy for all of us.

ST. ANDREW, APOSTLE

(II Class—November 30th)

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers).

And He saith to them: "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men."

And they, immediately leaving their nets, followed Him.

And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.

And they forthwith left their nets and father, and followed Him. (Matt., IV, 18-22.)

OUR SAVIOUR, walking by the Sea of Galilee that day, called four of the fishermen there to leave their nets and their work and to follow Him. Three of these four were later on, His three

"favored apostles," Peter and James and John. The fourth was St. Andrew, whose feast it is to-day, mentioned next to the great three in all the Gospel lists of the twelve apostles.

St. Andrew had met with our divine Saviour before. He had been a disciple of St. John the Baptist; and he and another disciple were standing with St. John one day, when Our Lord passed by. St. John the Baptist pointed Him out as He passed, and said: "Behold the Lamb of God! Behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world!" and immediately the two disciples left St. John and began to follow Christ. St. Andrew stayed with Christ for at least one day on that occasion, and brought to Him his brother, St. Peter, who afterward became the first of the Popes, and also St. Philip the Apostle. But his permanent call, with the promise of apostleship, was given him by Our Saviour later on, on the day which to-day's Gospel tells about, when Jesus said to him and to St. Peter: "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men."

After Our Saviour's Ascension and after Pentecost, St. Andrew labored hard and traveled far for Christ, spreading the Gospel and laying the foundations of the Church. He converted thousands to Christianity in European Scythia, which is now Russia. Even to the present day he is the patron saint of Russia. He is also the patron saint of Scotland. But he ended his labors in Greece, or Achaia, as the Romans then called it, where the Proconsul sentenced him, for his religion, to die on the cross.

St. Andrew heard his sentence joyfully. "Hail, precious Cross," he exclaimed, "receive His disciple who hung on Thee, my Master Christ!" When

they were dragging him, now an old man, to the place of execution and he could see from a distance the cross on which he was to die, he exclaimed again: "O good Cross, which has obtained beauty and glory from the limbs of the Lord, take me up from among men, and give me back to my Master! that through thee He may receive me Who through thee did redeem me!" Two whole days he hung upon it, not nailed, but fastened with cords that ate into his wrists and ankles, preaching to his executioners and to the multitudes of spectators, and converting many. Then he died in the Lord and rejoined his dear Master in the glory of heaven.

May he pray for us on this, his feast, and may we pray to him! "O great St. Andrew, Brother of Simon Peter, glorious Apostle and Martyr of Christ, intercede with Him for us!"

ST. NICHOLAS (SANTA CLAUS)

(Minor—December 6th)

A man going into a far country called his servants and delivered to them his goods.

And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one—to every one according to his proper ability; and immediately he took his journey.

And he that had received the five talents went his way and traded with the same, and gained other five.

And in like manner he that had received the two gained other two.

But he that had received the one, going his way, digged into the earth and hid his lord's money.

But after a long time the lord of those servants came and reckoned with them.

And he that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying: "Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained other five over and above."

His lord said to him: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

And he also that had received the two talents came and said: "Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me; behold, I have gained other two."

His lord said to him: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matt., xxv, 14-23.)

THE CHURCH applies these words to-day to St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra, in Asia Minor, who worked hard and successfully for Christ about sixteen hundred years ago, in the fourth century: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

St. Nicholas, first as a holy deacon and then as a zealous priest, had "been faithful over a few things"; so Christ's Church advanced him to be a bishop and an archbishop, thus placing him "over many things." During the fierce persecution of the Christians by the pagan emperor, Diocletian, he was arrested and tried for his holy religion. By God's grace he passed through the trial and torture triumphantly, so far as it went, and was cast into prison, where he also suffered much for Christ; but he did not gain the martyr's crown, because Diocletian died while St. Nicholas was still in prison, and the great Constantine, the first Christian emperor, ascended the throne.

St. Nicholas is Santa Claus. In the languages of the Netherlands and of Germany the name is Nicolaus and Niklaus; and we can see how easily in the course of centuries Santa Niklaus would be shortened into Santa 'Klaus. As Archbishop of Myra, he was so intensely devoted to the little children of his archdiocese, and in his own disposition so innocent and child-like, that when he died and entered "into the joy of his Lord" and was canonized, they made him the patron saint of children.

He is the patron of the young and of scholars. In England in the ancient times St. Nicholas' feast was celebrated with great solemnity in Eton and the other public schools. In Austria even yet the little children "hang up their stockings" on the eve of his feast, reserving for Christmas only the Christmas-tree. In Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland some member or friend of the family dresses up more or less like a bishop, representing St. Nicholas, or Santa Claus, and distributes gifts to the children.

Thus, on this earth, even after all these centuries, much joy and happiness comes to little children from that friend of children, that simple, earnest archbishop, whose holy feet trod this earth for a while sixteen hundred years ago. Christ gave to him the "talents" mentioned in to-day's gospel; and at the "reckoning" he returned them to Christ doubled and trebled after his diligent use of them: "Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained other five over and above." And Christ said to him: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

(I Class—December 8th)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth,

To a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel being come in, said unto her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." (Luke, I, 26-28.)

BLESSED among women, blessed before all women, blessed above all women, above all men and children, above all angels, archangels, principalities, virtues, powers, dominations, thrones, cherubim and seraphim, blessed above all the most highly-blessed spirits of heaven, is Mary Immaculate, the Mother of God.

God sees what we call the future and what we name the past, just precisely as He sees the present. There is neither past nor future, but only present, to the Infinite Spirit, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. All eternity is like one everlasting instant to God.

Forever and ever God sees His Mother Mary. Far, far back before the beginning of time, before He said "Let there be light," before He created out of nothing either heaven or earth or men or angels or any other creature, God saw and loved His Mother, Mary. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning. I was decreed from eternity, and of old before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived." (Prov. VIII, 22-24.) These sublime words of the Book of Proverbs are applied by the Church her-

self in the Breviary Office of to-day's feast, to Mary Immaculate, the Mother of God.

From all eternity God decreed to create. He would call out of nothing into existence and being, a spiritual world and a material world. In time, and at His own appointed time, He would create angels and mankind. And when He had created—down to the angels He would never descend, among the angels He would never take His place, with the angels He would never share a created relationship; but down to mankind God did descend, among mankind He took His place, with mankind He Himself shared a created relationship, the sweet relationship of child and son to mother. Forever and ever, from all eternity, He loves His Mother, and adorns and embellishes motherhood itself for her sake. How sweet and beautiful are mothers! And how supremely beautiful is God's Mother, Mary Immaculate!

"Thou art all beautiful, O Mary," the Church chants in the Office of to-day. "Thou art all beautiful, O Mary, and the original stain is not in thee. Thy vesture white as snow, thy face like the sun! Thou glory of Jerusalem, thou Joy of Israel, thou Honor of our people! Blessed art thou, Virgin Mary, by the high Lord God, beyond all women on the earth. Draw *us*, O Virgin Immaculate; we will run after thee in the odor of thy perfumes."

ST. THOMAS, APOSTLE

(II Class—December 21st)

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples therefore said to him: "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

And after eight days, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: "Peace be to you."

Then He saith to Thomas: "Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing."

Thomas answered, and said to Him: "My Lord, and my God!"

Jesus saith to him: "Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." (John xx, 24-29.)

TO-DAY, on the 21st of December, only four days before Christmas, the Church places the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle. He probably died on that date; because the Church does not celebrate the birth-day of her saints, but the death-day, which is their birth-day into the glorious everlasting life.

St. Thomas had established Christianity in Parthia, now the northern part of Persia, and in the countries near it. But the last years of his life were spent in India, where he died a martyr's death like his fellow-apostles, executed at the command of the king of one section of that country. The preaching of St. Thomas, with his extraordinary holiness and wonderful miracles, had converted nearly everyone, even the king's wife and son; but the king himself, a very obstinate idolater, was only more and more hardened and angered by it, until finally he condemned the apostle to be transfixed with spears by four of his soldiers till death should result.

St. Thomas had himself been an obstinate unbeliever at the beginning of his life, as to-day's gospel shows us. He was a young man of brave and generous impulses; because when Our Saviour on one occasion was going back into Judea, where His life was threatened, and when some of His disciples seemed afraid to go thither, St. Thomas spoke up and said: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (John, XI. 16); but although brave and generous, it was easy for him to distrust and doubt, and difficult for him to believe.

Even when our divine Lord said to His apostles after the Last Supper: "I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you also may be, and whither I go you know, and the way you know," Thomas said to Him: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" (John, XIV. 3-5.) There seems to have been a certain lack of faith and trust in that remark.

But obstinate and unreasonable unbelief is still more clearly evident in the Gospel just read to you. "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe," St. Thomas said.

Finally, however, through the mercy of his Master, Jesus Christ, his glorious conversion came, and his real faith began, to last now and to constantly increase through all the years, until the bitter-sweet end of his earth-life. He fell down on the ground, adoring before those pierced hands and feet, adoring, not Man alone arisen from the dead, but Man and Almighty God in one Divine Person. Thomas answered, and said to Him: "My Lord, and my God!"

CHRISTMAS EVE

(Simple—December 24)

When, as His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost.

Whereupon Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

"And she shall bring forth a Son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins." (Matt., I, 18-21.)

THIS gospel is a striking tribute to the beautiful, deep, solid humility of St. Joseph. He knew, at least after "the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep," that "Mary, his wife," was "with child of the Holy Ghost." Who or what that Child might be, he had trembled to conjecture. He had known, as his whole nation knew, that it was the prophesied time now for the long-expected Messias to be born. He knew that He must be born of a virgin, and he knew that "Mary, his wife," was a virgin. He knew well, even as he knew the Sacred Scriptures, that the Messias, the Saviour, would be man, yet more than man, more than angel; in a word, that the Saviour would be God. "God Himself will come and will save you." (Isaias, XXXV, 4.)

St. Joseph, present with "Mary, his wife," shortly before at Zachary's house, had heard Elizabeth call that unborn Child of Mary her Lord. He had seen Elizabeth tremble with reverential fear at receiv-

ing its august Mother into her home, and heard Elizabeth say to her: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke, 1, 42, 43.)

And St. Joseph in his profound humility had perhaps reasoned in this way: "If holy Elizabeth trembled with awe at receiving her into her house for three months, how shall I dare to stay with her and the dread Infant for life? Unworthy as I am to dwell even within miles of Him or her, I will separate from her at once and for good: not publicly, of course, by a bill of divorce, for that would 'expose her' to the suspicions and talk of the multitudes who do not understand. But privately and quietly I will divorce myself, to live my poor life far from them."

So St. Joseph had perhaps reasoned in his humble fear and awe at the dread Presence within Mary's womb, even as St. Peter years afterward threw himself at the knees of that same God-Man and sincerely prayed to Him: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke, v, 8.)

But God, Who always, sooner or later, either in this world or in the next, exalts the humble and puts down the proud, not only hindered St. Joseph from making that awful sacrifice and enduring that bitter, life-long separation which he was contemplating, but actually commanded him by His angel to remain where he was, the virgin husband of the Virgin Mary, and to act, not only in the naming of Jesus, but in all other matters as well, as representative upon this earth of God the Father, and as father on this earth of God the Son.

Thus great St. Joseph, holier, as many think, than any creature God ever made excepting Mary,

and, therefore, more humble than any excepting Mary, was exalted by God to the most responsible position which any mere creature, excepting Mary herself, has ever held. "Because everyone that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." (Luke, XIV, 11.)

CHRISTMAS (MIDNIGHT MASS)

(I Class—December 25th)

And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled.

This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus, the governor of Syria.

And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: because he was of the house and family of David,

To be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child.

And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night watches over their flock.

And, behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them; and they feared with a great fear.

And the angel said to them: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people:

"For this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David.

"And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying:

"Glory to God in the highest! and on earth peace to men of good will." (Luke, II, 1-14.)

ONCE more we celebrate this joyful Christmas morning, with its message of glory to God and peace to mankind; not to all mankind, not to all men, but to those "of good will."

God never forces the human will. It is good or bad according to our own free choice: good in the state of grace; bad if in mortal sin. But to those "of good will," peace and joy this happy Christmas morning! Peace, joy, courage; fearlessness, assurance, confidence; "for this day is born to you a Saviour, Christ the Lord!" He is Almighty God, the Infinite Spirit, and it is because He loves you that He took human nature nine months ago in Mary's holy bosom, and it is because He loves you that He is born to-day and "wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger," and it is because He loves you that He will die in agony on a cross thirty-three years from now. For His love, like Himself, is boundless, limitless, infinite. And, therefore, "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

Glory to Him for His infinite love, and peace unto us on account of it! When He loves us so much, what need we fear? What shall disturb our peace? Neither the troubles of earth, nor the sufferings of purgatory; neither wicked men, nor the demons themselves, though they were visible even to our bodily eyes in all their hideousness and horror.

"Peace on earth," and peace beyond the grave, and peace for all eternity, is ours, provided we keep ourselves men and women and children "of good will."

Therefore, from the bottom of our grateful hearts this happy Christmas morning, with the angels who brought the "good tidings of great joy" to the humble shepherds, let us say: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will!" And let us continue, as the Church does in the Gloria of the Mass: "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we glorify Thee, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty, O Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father! Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us! Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer! Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us! For Thou only holy, Thou only Lord, Thou only Most High, Jesus Christ with the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father! Amen!"

CHRISTMAS (MASS AT DAWN)

(I Class—December 25th)

And it came to pass, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us."

And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger.

And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this Child.

And all that heard, wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. (Luke, II, 15-20.)

ST. LUKE the Evangelist, whose description of that first Christmas I have just now read to you, knew Mary well and intimately for years after Our Saviour's ascension into heaven. But Mary had "kept all these words, pondering them in her heart" and treasuring them in her memory. And from her own blessed tongue St. Luke heard them over and over, and finally, inspired by the Holy Ghost, recorded them in this second chapter of his Gospel, to hand them down to us.

The shepherds came over to Bethlehem to see and greet the new-born Saviour. "They came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger." They saw a human Infant weak and helpless, as truly human as we ourselves, like us in all things except sin. But the angels had enkindled faith in their souls, "and seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this Child," and knew well that this was the long-expected Messias, the Christ: "for this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord." And the shepherds returned to their flocks and their duties, "glorifying and praising God."

And so shall we return, dear brethren, when the Mass is over this happy Christmas morning—so shall we return to our homes and our duties, "glorifying and praising God." For like the shepherds, we are here with faith in our souls and, thanks be

to God, we see and understand "concerning this Child." Nineteen hundred years after His birth our hearts and intellects are thrilled with that everlasting truth which, seven hundred and eighty-five years before his birth, the prophet Isaias expressed so beautifully: "For a child is born to us"—Isaias wrote—"For a Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called 'Wonderful,' 'Counsellor,' 'God the Mighty,' 'the Father of the world to come,' 'the Prince of Peace.'" (Isaias, IX, 6.)

Isaias was gifted by God the Holy Ghost with the gift of prophecy; we are gifted by the same bountiful Holy Spirit with the gift of faith. As Isaias looked forward, we look back; and both of us see "Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger": Jesus, Mary and Joseph, on earth then, in heaven now, with us whenever we want them, whenever we call them: with us in life; with us at death; and surely with us this happy Christmas morning!

CHRISTMAS DAY

(I Class—December 25th)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made.

In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.

And the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend It.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the Light, that all men might believe through him.

He was not the Light, but was to give testimony of the Light.

That was the true Light, Which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.

He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name,

Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the Only-Begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth. (John I, 1-14.)

IN HOLY Scripture God the Son and God the Word mean the same. "In the beginning," that is, from all eternity and to all eternity, the Father generates the Son, the Son is born of the Father. It is an everlasting generation, without beginning, without end, an everlasting birth. But it is spiritual; for "God is a Spirit." (John, IV, 24.) "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh," Our Saviour said, "and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." (John, III, 6.)

Therefore, the Son of God is so often called "the Word," in Holy Scripture. Forever and ever God the Son is born of God the Father. And this everlasting, spiritual birth of Our Saviour from His Father according to His Divine nature, is immensely different from His momentary, instantaneous human birth from His blessed Mother according to his human nature.

You think of light, let us suppose, and your intelligence or mind, your spirit I might say, forms

the word "light" inwardly even before your lips pronounce it. It is that mental word, which your mind conceives and gives birth to, and not the spoken word, that illustrates feebly for our feeble human minds the mysterious, adorable, spiritual birth of God the Son from God the Father. So sometimes in Sacred Scripture He is named the Son, and sometimes He is named the Word. Spiritual birth seems somewhat like a mental word that your mind conceives and gives birth to while your lips are silent.

Very frequently in Holy Scripture the Second Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity, Who to-day became for us the Babe of Bethlehem, is called "the Word": "There are Three Who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost" (1 John, v, 7); that text is from the first Epistle of St. John. "And His name is called the Word of God" (Apoc., XIX, 13); that is from the Apocalypse. "And they cried to the Lord in their affliction: and He delivered them out of their distresses. He sent His Word, and healed them: and delivered them from their destructions" (Ps., CVI, 19, 20); that prophecy is from the Psalms. "God of my fathers and Lord of mercy, Who hast made all things by Thy Word!" (Wisd., IX, 1); that is from the Book of Wisdom. "For while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leapt down from heaven from Thy royal throne" (Wisd., XVIII, 14, 15); that prophecy is also from the Book of Wisdom. But grandest of all these passages is that sublime gospel of St. John which was read to you a moment ago: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

The Church selects this gospel for the third Mass of Christmas Day, as if to close and crown her solemn celebration of Christmas morning with those sublime words of the Eagle-Evangelist, St. John the Beloved. For all the beauty and grandeur and love—all the joy of Christmas—flowers forth from that tremendous fact that on Christmas—the Word made Flesh, began outwardly to dwell among us.

ST. STEPHEN, PROTOMARTYR
(II Class—December 26th)

Therefore, behold, I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city:

That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the Temple and the altar.

Amen, I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings; and thou wouldest not!

Behold, your house shall be left to you, desolate!

For I say to you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you say: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt., XXIII, 34-39.)

OUR divine Saviour was sternly rebuking the leading men of Jerusalem, when He spoke those words three days before He died. On a Tuesday He spoke those words, and the following Friday they crucified Him.

"Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," He had said a moment before; "because you are like to whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly indeed appear to men just; but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; that build the sepulchers of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of the just, and say: 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." (Matt., XXIII, 27-30.)

Their forefathers had slaughtered those prophets. They had sawed Isaias into two pieces, they had stoned Jeremias, they had martyred Ezechiel and the others; and now these leading men of Jerusalem were building beautiful monuments to those martyred prophets and declaring that if they had lived in the times of their fathers, they would never have shed their blood.

"You serpents," Our Saviour said to them, "Generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?" (Matt., XXIII, 33); for He knew then, as well as we know now, that at that very moment they were planning and plotting His death; that three days later they would crucify Him; that St. Stephen they would stone; that St. James the Greater they would slay with the sword; and St. James the Less, by casting him down from the pinnacle of the Temple to be dashed to death upon the pavement; that St. Peter and St. John would be imprisoned by them, and St. Paul and St. Barnabas "persecuted from city to city."

To-day is the Feast of St. Stephen, and therefore the Church places this gospel in the Mass of to-day.

St. Stephen was the first of all Christ's followers to die for his Divine Master. Hundreds of thousands have since then shed their blood for Christ, following St. Stephen. For St. Stephen led the way. He is the Protomartyr. He was stoned to death about four years after Our Saviour's Ascension.

"They stoned Stephen invoking and saying: 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, saying: 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord." (Acts, VII, 58, 59.)

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem," Our Saviour said to them on that Tuesday before His crucifixion, "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not! Behold, your house is left to you, desolate!"

Forty years later on, their house was indeed left to them desolate—their temple destroyed, their city flattened to the ground, they and their people scattered abroad in foreign regions. For nineteen hundred years now they have been without temple or altar, without country or flag. Because they rejected Christ.

May we never dare to reject Him! May the great saint of to-day's feast, whom they stoned to death, intercede for us with the loving Saviour whom they crucified. And may that Saviour hold us with Him —at His altar, in His Church—even to the happy, blessed end!

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

(II Class—December 27th)

Peter, turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved, following, who also leaned on His breast at supper and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray thee?"

Him therefore when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: "Lord, and what shall this man do?"

Jesus saith to him: "So I will have him to remain till I come; what is it to thee? follow thou Me."

This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him he should not die, but "So I will have him to remain till I come; what is it to thee?"

This is that disciple who giveth testimony of these things, and hath written these things; and we know that his testimony is true. (John, XXI, 20-24.)

THE CHURCH celebrates the Feast of St. John the Evangelist every year on the second day after Christmas, and places this gospel I have just now read to you in the Mass of that day.

St. Peter was following his Divine Master on the shores of the lake. Our Saviour had commissioned him His Vicar on earth, giving him full authority as the Visible Head of His Church. He had also foretold to St. Peter the manner of St. Peter's death, "signifying by what death he should glorify God," and afterward said to him: "Follow Me." St. John followed too, at a little distance, and then the rest of the group, St. Thomas, St. James, St. Nathanael, and two others whose names are not given. St. Peter did not ask about them, but only about St. John, "that disciple whom Jesus loved—who also leaned on His breast at supper" the night before He died. Knowing now that he himself would die in his old age by crucifixion, St.

Peter inquired about St. John: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" And Our Saviour answered Peter: "So I will have him to remain till I come; what is it to thee? Follow thou Me."

Some of the apostles and disciples, and many of the Fathers of the Church in the centuries since then, understood by these words of our divine Saviour that St. John would not die, but would be removed from earth without death and placed, not in heaven, but somewhere in this universe, in some place of happiness, where Enoch and Elias already were. Enoch did not die, but "walked with God, and was seen no more, because God took him." (Gen., v, 24.) Elias was with his disciple and successor Eliseus "and as they went on walking and talking together, behold, a fiery chariot and fiery horses parted them both asunder, and Elias went up by a whirlwind into heaven." (IV Kings, II, 11.) Enoch, about five thousand years old now, and Elias, about twenty-seven hundred years old, are still living somewhere in some mysterious place or state of great happiness, and will appear among men once more toward the end of time to fight against Antichrist. Then at length they will die, as "it is appointed for all men once to die," and very soon rise again from the dead.

So about St. John the Beloved, to-day's gospel tells us that "this saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him he should not die, but 'So I will have him to remain till I come.'" This is what St. John himself wrote about it, inspired by the Holy Ghost. And the common opinion in the Church is that St. John was not "translated" without death to the blessed company of Enoch and Elias, but that he died in Ephesus,

about the year 101, at the age of ninety-three. His brother, St. James, was the first of the eleven apostles to die, and he was the last.

To-day on his feast, while we, together with the Universal Church, are honoring his sanctified memory, may he, whom Jesus loved with a special love, "who also leaned on His breast at supper" and perhaps heard the beating of His Sacred Heart, pray to Jesus for us.

THE HOLY INNOCENTS

(II Class—December 28th)

"And after they were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: "Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him."

Who arose, and took the Child and His Mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and he was there until the death of Herod:

That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry; and, sending, killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying:

"A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning: Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." (Matt., II, 13-18.)

RACHEL, the wife of Jacob whose twelve sons were the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel, was buried at Rama, not very far from Bethle-

hem, where her tomb had been famous for hundreds of years. And Jeremias' prophecy about her was at last fulfilled when Herod massacred the Holy Innocents: "Thus saith the Lord: A voice was heard on high of lamentation, of mourning, and weeping, of Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted for them, because they are not. Thus saith the Lord: Let thy voice cease from weeping, and thy eyes from tears." (Jer., XXXI, 15, 16.)

How many there were, is not known. Bethlehem was a small town, and it was only the male children two years old and younger, that were massacred. The number would not seem to have been extremely great. But they died for Christ, or at least in His place. It was on Christ's account, hoping to kill the Christ Whom he dreaded, that the cruel king gave orders for their slaughter. And our divine Lord, who was already in Egypt or on the way, beyond Herod's power, safe in the arms of His blessed Mother and protected by His wise foster-father, the great Provider St. Joseph, has most richly rewarded them.

It was not a Baptism of blood; because Baptism was not yet instituted. Besides, Baptism admits a dying infant instantaneously to heaven and the Vision of God. The Holy Innocents did not go straight to heaven, but to that "place or state of rest called Limbo, where the souls of the just were waiting" for Christ's crucifixion. It was more than thirty years afterward that Our Saviour, after enduring triumphantly His own great Passion, opened for them the gates of heaven.

The Church rightly makes much of the Holy Innocents. To-day, the third day after Christmas, is their feast. It has been a double feast of the

second class for nearly five hundred years now. Over in Bethlehem it is a holyday of obligation. The Church wears red for them, as for its other martyrs. She calls these holy infants the flowers of the martyrs, the little buds whom Christ's persecutor cut down on the very threshold of life, as an untimely gale scatters the roses before they bloom; and in that same beautiful hymn of to-day's Office she represents this tender little flock of bleeding victims, these first sacrifices for Christ Our Lord, as playing child-fashion with their martyrs' palms and their crowns of glory before the altar itself.

"These are they who were not defiled," the Church says in the epistle of to-day's Mass, quoting from that great vision of St. John the Beloved in the Apocalypse, "for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb; and in their mouth there was found no lie; for they are without spot before the throne of God." And the Church prays: "O God, Whose glory the martyred Innocents did this day confess, not by speaking, but by dying; make all evil vices die within us, that our life may declare Thy faith, which our tongue professes: through Our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who, God with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns, world without end. Amen."

ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

(Minor—December 29th)

"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.

"But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep:

"And the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling and he hath no care for the sheep.

"I am the Good Shepherd; and I know Mine, and Mine know Me,

"As the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for My sheep.

"And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My Voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." (John, x, 11-16.)

ST. THOMAS of Canterbury humbly imitated our divine Saviour in many ways, but most gloriously of all by laying down his life for his sheep. The entire population of England, men, women and children, were the flock of St. Thomas; because, being Archbishop of Canterbury, he was Primate of England. And for that flock, for those sheep, he laid down his life. King Henry II was attempting what King Henry VIII three hundred and fifty years afterward wickedly carried out. He was attempting to wrest away from the Pope religious authority and power over England, and to vest it in himself and his successors. And inch by inch St. Thomas successfully fought him, defended the Church, defended his sheep, against the royal wolf, for three years in Canterbury and then for six years in exile on the Continent, whither he had to fly for his life. But he completely triumphed only when, after returning from exile, he shed his blood at the foot of the altar in Canterbury Cathedral.

The Church places the Feast of St. Thomas on December 29th, so near to Christmas, because that

was the day on which he died. At the beginning of December, 1170, he crossed the Channel homeward, after his six years' exile. He sang the Midnight Mass in his Cathedral of Canterbury on Christmas Eve and another Solemn High Mass Christmas forenoon, at which he preached. Nine of the archbishops of Canterbury are canonized saints, seven before St. Thomas and one after him. In his sermon that Christmas forenoon, St. Thomas referred to the saints among his predecessors, one of whom was a martyr. "You have had one martyr, St. Elphedge, among your archbishops," St. Thomas said; "and it may be that you soon will have another"; and for a few moments nothing but sobbing and groaning could be heard in the crowded Cathedral. On St. Stephen's Day and St. John's Day he again pontificated. On the Feast of the Holy Innocents the four ruffian knights who slaughtered him, arrived near Canterbury. The next day, December 29th, St. Thomas was at Vespers in the Cathedral when these four friends of the king rushed into the church and into the sanctuary itself, in full armor, savagely slashing St. Thomas with their swords over and over, until his holy body lay there dead at the foot of the altar.

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"; and the blood of St. Thomas of Canterbury kept England Roman Catholic for fully three hundred and fifty years longer. "Certainly it was worth while to die!" the Champion of the Church would say from his happy throne high up in the glory of heaven. For, humbly imitating his Divine Master in life and in death, he had laid down his life for his sheep.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

And His father and Mother were wondering at those things that were spoken concerning Him.

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His Mother: "Behold, this Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection, of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted:

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity.

And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the Temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day.

Now she, at the same hour, coming in, confessed to the Lord; and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel.

And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their city, Nazareth.

And the Child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom; and the grace of God was in Him. (Luke, II, 33-40.)

AND His father and Mother were wondering at those things that were spoken concerning Him." Great St. Joseph, to be called "His father" by St. Luke the Evangelist writing under the inspiration of God the Holy Ghost! To be called "His father" by Mary herself over and over during the happy home-life at Nazareth, as, for example, when He was a boy of twelve she said to Him: "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." (Luke, II, 48.) To be called "His father"

by Jesus Himself thousands of times probably on earth, and forever and ever in heaven! Great St. Joseph!

St. Joseph was not a stepfather. A stepfather is the father of another man's son. St. Joseph was not the father of another man's son; he was the father of the Son of God. St. Joseph was not an adoptive father. He did not adopt Our Saviour into his family, but Our Saviour was conceived and born in his family. Instead of his choosing our divine Lord for his Son, as an adoptive father does, Our Lord chose him from all eternity for His father. Our Lord was the only one of all the sons of Adam Who could choose His own father, because he was the only one Who existed from all eternity in His divine nature before He was either conceived or born in His human nature. St. Joseph was truly a foster-father, that is, one who fosters and supports by his labor a little child whom he has not begotten. St. Joseph was truly that, but he was also more than that.

The Virgin Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the "father" of Christ (as St. Augustine explains it), not only in the sense of being His reputed father, not only in the sense of being His foster-father, but also in this sense: that Christ was miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost in the family of which St. Joseph was the head, in the womb of St. Joseph's Virgin Wife, and thus born *to* St. Joseph in lawful marriage; and also in this sense: that that marvelous, most beautiful, virginal marriage of Joseph and Mary was designed and ordained by God from all eternity precisely on Christ's account.

Great St. Joseph! When the happy Christmas midnight came, and Divine Poverty lay there in

the manger, and the angels sang their Gloria, and the shepherds adored, and the big, kind cattle warmed the little weakling with their breath, not only holy Mary, but dear St. Joseph with her, could say: "For a Child is born to *us*, and a Son is given to *us*, and the government is upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called 'Wonderful,' 'Counsellor,' 'God the Mighty,' 'the Father of the world to come,' 'the Prince of peace.'" (Isai., IX, 6.)

ST. SYLVESTER

(Minor—December 31st)

"Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands,

"And you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord when he shall return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately.

"Blessed are those servants whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen, I say to you, that he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them.

"And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

"But this know ye, that if the householder did know at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open.

"Be you then also ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come." (Luke, XII, 35-40.)

ON THE 31st of December, the last day of the year, the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Sylvester. That was the month and day on which he died, nearly sixteen hundred years ago, December 31, 335. The Church does not celebrate the

birthday of her saints (excepting the great Queen of Saints and St. John the Baptist), because they were not saints when they were born. But they were saints when they died; and their death-day was their *real* birthday into the *real,* lasting life, the unending glory of heaven.

St. Sylvester was Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Christ on earth. He was the thirty-third from St. Peter of the two hundred and sixty-one Popes. Seventy-eight of the two hundred and sixty-one are canonized saints, a glorious record. The thirty-two before St. Sylvester, with rare exceptions, were martyrs, one after another gladly shedding his blood for Christ, beginning with St. Peter himself. But St. Sylvester did not die for Christ; because the three hundred years of bitter persecution had come to an end at last, when Constantine, son of St. Helena and first Christian Emperor of Rome, gradually but steadily ascended to the supreme power. St. Sylvester, therefore, was not a martyr, but a confessor.

When the Church, after its three hundred years in the Catacombs, came up at last into the light of day, St. Sylvester was at its head. And as the thirty-two saints and martyrs who had preceded him on the Papal throne had triumphantly guided the Church through its three long centuries of martyrdom and suffering, so St. Sylvester safely directed it along its new and unfamiliar path of peace and prosperity.

Successfully he governed the Church, because successfully he governed himself. The Breviary tells us that in him there "perpetually responded to the heavenly prudence with which he administered the Church, a remarkable holiness of life and benignity toward the poor." Ever ready and

watching, his loins girt and the lamp burning in his hand, the confessor-pontiff waited for his Lord.

"Blessed are those servants," Our Saviour says in the gospel of to-day, "whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen, I say to you, that he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and, passing (to and fro), will minister unto them."

To-day we are on the very threshold of another new year. May St. Sylvester pray for us! Even as every twelvemonth his feast ushers in a new year to us, so his reign in Rome sixteen hundred years ago ushered in to the Church of Christ a long new year of freedom from persecution.

And like St. Sylvester may we keep ourselves this coming year and every year, watching and ready for the one decisive moment of our whole everlasting existence, the moment of death, reaping fruit from Our Saviour's warning in the Gospel of to-day: "Be you then also ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come."

THE CIRCUMCISION

(II Class—January 1st)

And after eight days were accomplished, that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel, before He was conceived in the womb. (Luke, II, 21.)

ON THE eighth day counting His birthday, that is, on the octave-day of Christmas, Jesus was circumcised. Some priest or Levite probably performed the ceremony, in the stable where, a week before, Our Lord had been born.

Our divine Saviour was obeying His own law. As man and in His human nature, He was obeying the law which as God and in His divine nature He Himself had promulgated nearly two thousand years before. It was a very strict law: that all male descendants of Abraham should be circumcised on the eighth day. But of course Our Lord was not bound by it. He obeyed it, freely and of His own volition, without any obligation whatever either in conscience or otherwise.

He wished to set us the example of obedience, even from His earliest infancy, and of respect for all laws, civil and religious. He desired to humble Himself from the very beginning. Circumcision was humiliating, because circumcision was for sinners, as Baptism now is; it remitted, not only original sin, but also actual sins, if the person circumcised had been guilty of any. Almighty God, the Second Person, certainly had already humbled Himself by becoming a human infant; but He humbled Himself far more by taking upon Himself the form and appearance of a sinner, as He did when He submitted Himself to circumcision.

But, most of all, Our Saviour longed to begin His passion as early as possible after His holy birth, and to shed the first drops of His precious blood for us. His circumcision was the beginning of His passion. It was not only the shedding of His blood, but it was also sharp pain, which He could feel as ordinary infants of His age probably could not.

It was for this that He came: to bleed, to suffer and to die. Love brought Him; and the best proof of love is suffering and dying for the beloved. Gifts and kindness, smiles and caresses, indicate love; but suffering for one or dying for one, proves

love beyond the possibility of a doubt. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John, xv, 13.)

Our divine Saviour came down from heaven to this sin-stained earth, burning with love for us, "His friends." He wished to manifest that wondrous love, to prove it to us. Therefore, when only eight days old, He began to endure sharp pain for us, He began to shed His precious blood for us, by submitting to the circumcision.

May we begin this new year, remembering above all things His burning, loving Sacred Heart! And may it be a happy, holy year for every one of us, made happy and holy with God's help even for our own sake, but above all for His sake Who loves us at one and the same moment with the immense love of the Perfect Man and with the infinite love of Almighty God.

HOLY NAME OF JESUS

(II Class—Sunday between Circumcision and Epiphany; or, if none occurs, January 2nd)

And after eight days were accomplished, that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel, before He was conceived in the womb. (Luke, II, 21.)

THIS gospel that I have just now read to you, is the shortest gospel of the year, being only one verse from the second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke; and it is placed by the Church on the Feast of the Circumcision and again on the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus.

The holy name of Jesus means Saviour. "Jesus" in Hebrew, corresponds to "Saviour" in English.

And our divine Lord bears that adorable name, not only because He Himself is the Saviour of men, but also because He has given and does give to apostles, bishops, priests and others the power to save men. Therefore "His name was called Jesus."

Almighty God from all eternity chose this name, to be conferred upon His only-begotten Son when that Son should become man. The angel Gabriel, who brought to the Blessed Virgin God's invitation to be His Mother, brought to her also that holy name for her divine Son: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus." (Luke, I, 31.) A moment afterward Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke, I, 38), and conceived of the Holy Ghost. Still later on, the angel of the Lord gave this adorable name chosen by God also to St. Joseph, the head of the Holy Family, to be conferred by him likewise, as representative on earth of God the Father, upon God the only-begotten Son: "That which is conceived in her," the angel said to St. Joseph, "is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins." (Matt., I, 20, 21.)

How beautifully, in the one adorable Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and in His earthly history, the low and the high, the humble and the infinitely sublime, the human and the divine, are united! At one and the same instant "He lies in the manger and reigns in heaven." As if He were an ordinary sinner, He receives circumcision, and the next moment, to signify that He is the Divine Saviour of sinners, He receives the

glorious name of Jesus. Like the poorest of infants He is born in a stable; yet angels from heaven send the shepherds to adore Him, and a wondrous star appears miraculously in the sky to guide the three wise kings. Thirty years after, He stoops Himself to receive the Baptism of St. John; and directly God the Holy Ghost descends visibly upon Him, and the Voice of the Father proclaims from heaven: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (Matt., III, 17.) "Despised and the most abject of men" (Isai., LIII, 3), He hangs upon the cross; but when He dies upon it the sun is darkened, the solid rocks are rended asunder, the earth itself quakes and trembles. The more He humbles Himself in His human nature, the more His divine nature exalts Him.

Let us love Him and adore His holy name. For He is our only hope, our only Saviour; and His name of Jesus *means* all that He is. May it be on our lips in all the dangers, temptations and trials of our life! May it be on our lips at the solemn moment of our death!

VIGIL OF EPIPHANY

(Semidouble—January 5th)

But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt,

Saying: "Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the Child."

Who arose, and took the Child and His Mother, and came into the land of Israel.

But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and, being warned in sleep, retired into the quarters of Galilee.

And coming, he dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets: That He shall be called a Nazarene. (Matt., II, 19-23.)

"I CALLED My Son out of Egypt" (Osee, XI, 1), God said by the prophet Osee more than eight hundred years before Christ was born; and when this angel "appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt," the prophecy was fulfilled. "Arise," the angel said, "and take the Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel." And St. Joseph "arose, and took the Child and His Mother, and came into the land of Israel."

It was the return from exile, the home-coming of the King, the Son of David and Son of God, still a very small Child—some traditions say about two years old, others as much as eight or nine—came back to His home-land, to His own Chosen People, as humbly as He had fled away. His blessed Mother's arms were round about Him; St. Joseph was protecting Him; that was the whole court, the whole retinue and army of this King of kings.

The King Herod who had slaughtered the Holy Infants in his attempt to kill this divine Infant, was dead. The Herod who would mock him and ridicule Him during His sacred passion, was not yet on the throne. But a son of the former and older brother of the latter, Archelaus, was governing in Judea; and through fear of him St. Joseph, warned again by the angel, conducted them into Galilee, where they made their humble home "in a city called Nazareth."

"Mary's Nazareth," it is often called nowadays. Nazareth was the birth-place of His immaculate Mother and would be the death-place of His foster-father St. Joseph. At Nazareth He Himself had

been conceived of the Holy Ghost. "The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.'" (Luke, I, 26-28.) At Nazareth Our Saviour dwelt from the time of His return from Egypt until He was a man of thirty.

So our divine Lord was called Jesus the Nazarene or Jesus of Nazareth, even as the prophets had foretold that He would be. The devils whom He was expelling from possessed people, cried out: "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth?" (Mark, I, 24.) The angel in the sepulcher said to the holy women just after His resurrection: "You seek Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified: He is risen, He is not here." (Mark, XVI, 6.) "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth" (Mark, XIV, 67), they said to St. Peter on Holy Thursday night. And when He hung upon the cross, above His head was the inscription: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." (John, XIX, 19.) "Silver and gold I have none," St. Peter said to the lame man soon after Pentecost, "but what I have, I give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise, and walk." (Acts, III, 6.) And later on, "Who art thou, Lord?" St. Paul asked on the road to Damascus, and Our Saviour replied: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest." (Acts, XXII, 8.) So in life and in death and after His resurrection and after His ascension into heaven, and forever and ever, the Son of Mary, our God and Saviour, is called, by devils, angels, men, and even by His own blessed lips, Jesus of Nazareth.

EPIPHANY

(I Class—January 6th)

When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem,

Saying: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and are come to adore Him."

And King Herod, hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born.

But they said to him: "In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet:

"'And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the Captain that shall rule My people Israel.'"

Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them;

And sending them into Bethlehem, said: "Go, and diligently inquire after the Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him."

Who, having heard the king, went their way; and, behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was.

And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary His Mother, and falling down they adored Him; and, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country. (Matt., II, 1-12.)

WHEN the long-promised Messias came at last, it was His divine will that it should be understood from the very beginning, that He did not come for the Jews alone, but for all mankind as well. So He was scarcely born, when these three wise and royal strangers entered Jerusalem with great pomp and magnificence, led from the East, Arabia, Persia or possibly India, by a miraculous star, seeking and searching for the new-born King, that they might pay Him their homage immediately, and humbly adore Him. "King of the Jews," they called Him; but their long, laborious journey and their anxiety to find Him and adore Him, plainly declared to all that they considered Him King of themselves, and of their distant countries and subjects, as well as King of the Jews. King of themselves, and therefore "King of kings," for these three were kings. And when they adored Our Saviour, they said by their action what St. Paul, inspired by the Holy Ghost, later on wrote, in ringing words, about "our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . Who is the Blessed and Only Mighty, the King of kings and Lord of lords." (1 Tim., VI, 14, 15.)

All the Gentile nations of the world, from some of which we are descended, were represented at the manger of Bethlehem by these three wise kings. It was our divine Lord's manifestation of Himself, in His earliest infancy, to the Gentile nations; and the very name of the glorious feast which we are celebrating to-day, has that meaning. "Epiphany" means the showing forth, the manifestation or appearance. He had appeared, at His very birth, to the shepherds, but they were Jews. The various inhabitants of Bethlehem, who probably visited the Holy Family on the following days, were also Jews. But when the three wise kings were nearing

Bethlehem and "the star which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was, and seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy and entering into the house, the found the Child with Mary His Mother and, falling down, they adored Him and, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh," then our divine Lord was showing Himself for the first time to the gentiles.

Therefore we, who are not Jews nor of Jewish extraction, but are descended from those other nations which they called the Gentiles, celebrate with particular devotion this glorious Feast of the Epiphany. On this day, over nineteen hundred years ago, our representatives "found the Child with Mary His Mother and, falling down, they adored Him"; and after all these nineteen hundred years, thanks be to Him, we still adore Him; and with His help we always will,—here on earth, in the darkness of faith,—but afterward above in the light of glory, and the everlasting brightness of the Vision.

THE HOLY FAMILY

(Major—Sunday within the Octave of Epiphany)

And when He was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast,

And having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and His parents knew it not.

And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance.

And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him.

And it came to pass that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions.

And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers.

And seeing Him, they wondered. And His Mother said to Him: "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

And He said to them: "How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them.

And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And His Mother kept all these words in her heart.

And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men. (Luke, II, 42-52.)

THE Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, was like other families in many ways, and in many ways immensely different.

The foundation of every family is marriage. The first and fundamental bond of union for the whole family is the marriage-tie between the husband and the wife. In this particular the Holy Family was like others. Mary and Joseph were truly married, true wife and true husband. Mary was bound in conscience to love, honor and obey St. Joseph till death should part them. Joseph was similarly bound to love and cherish "Mary his wife." (Matt., I, 20.) The vow of perpetual chastity which the Virgin Mother had and which St. Joseph also had long before marriage was even mentioned to either of them, and which each of them knew from God that the other had, was a simple vow which did not

make the marriage-contract null and void. It was only when they both privately renewed this vow of chastity immediately after the marriage-ceremony that they made it a solemn vow.

Mary's relationship to Jesus was like other motherhoods in many ways; yet in one very important particular it was different. The adorable body of her divine Infant was *all* from her; not partly from her and partly from her husband, as is the case in all other human families without exception, but wholly and entirely from her. And so her relationship to her divine Son, her virgin-motherhood, was immensely more direct, more intense and more all-embracing than any other motherhood could ever be.

Joseph's relationship to Jesus was also unique. There is nothing similar to it in the entire history of God's creation, either among angels or men. Natural, direct blood-relationship between Jesus and Joseph, of course there was none whatever; and yet the latter was in one sense His father. When Mary said, as in to-day's gospel, "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing," she was not using the word "father" in a careless or merely conventional way, still less, in an untruthful way. When the Evangelist wrote the words "His father and Mother," and more than once "His parents" (Luke, II, 27, 33, 41), he was writing under the inspiration of God the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth.

In every other family without exception the child is either the father's own flesh and blood, or else the offspring of some other marriage or union; but in the Holy Family the divine Child is neither St. Joseph's own flesh and blood nor the offspring of any other man; but was conceived of the Holy

Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph's lawful Wife, to St. Joseph in that Family of which St. Joseph was the head, and in lawful marriage. In this one sense, as St. Augustine explains, and in this manner, St. Joseph is the "father" of Jesus.

To-day is the Feast of the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, so more than dear to Catholics. As they dwelt together at Nazareth for so many happy years, as they reign together now in the everlasting glory, so do we adore Jesus, so do we implore Mary and Joseph. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, be with us, now and at the hour of our death!

OCTAVE-DAY OF EPIPHANY

(Major—January 13th)

The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world.

"This is He of Whom I said: 'After me there cometh a Man, Who is preferred before me, because He was before me.'

"And I knew Him not; but that He may be made manifest in Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water."

And John gave testimony, saying: "I saw the Spirit coming down, as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon Him.

"And I knew him not: but He Who sent me to baptize with water, said to me: 'He upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.'

"And I saw, and I gave testimony, that this is the Son of God." (John, 1, 29-34.)

OUR divine Saviour and St. John the Baptist were the same age in years. In months, St. John was six months older. Speaking of our divine Saviour "according to the flesh" and according to His human nature, He and St. John the Baptist were cousins; St. John's mother, St. Elizabeth, was a cousin of our blessed Lady; so Christ and St. John would be distant cousins, second cousins at the very nearest.

St. John did not know our divine Saviour by sight until they were both thirty years old. Notwithstanding their relationship, they had never met from the time of their birth. Our Saviour had spent a very few years in Egypt, and the remainder at Nazareth in Galilee. St. John had passed all his years from early childhood as a holy hermit in the deserts of Judea. So all their lives they were far apart, until about the time of Christ's baptism.

Immediately after submitting Himself to the baptism of John, for His own wise and holy reasons, and insisting upon receiving it from him, God the Son Incarnate was led by God the Holy Ghost into the wilderness, where He fasted for forty days. Then after conquering Satan and his temptations, He returned to St. John "in Bethania beyond the Jordan" (John, I, 28), where John was still baptizing.

At this time St. John the Baptist knew his divine Cousin by sight, and pointed Him out to the people, as the gospel of to-day describes to us. Did he know Him at that other meeting with Him about forty days before, when despite his humility he obeyed our divine Lord by baptizing Him? After the baptism he knew Him, because after Christ's baptism St. John "saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon Him,"

and that was the sign God had given St. John by which to know Our Lord when He should come. But did he know Him by sight before Christ's baptism? That is more doubtful. Even if he did not know Him then as his divine Cousin and the promised Messias, the very appearance, the very looks of Our Lord would be enough to make St. John realize his own vast inferiority to Him and to make him say: "I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?" (Matt., III, 14.) Or it may be that St. John saw the Holy Ghost descending upon Christ and remaining upon Christ twice that day, once before and once after His baptism. In that case he knew Him even before the baptism.

When he knew Him, then in no uncertain way he proclaimed Him to the people: "Behold the Lamb of God! Behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world! This is He, of Whom I said: 'After me there cometh a Man, Who is preferred before me, because He was before me.'"

"Behold the Lamb," that is, the meek, humble Victim of Calvary; "the Lamb of God," that is, the Victim divine, as truly God as truly Man; behold the Messias, the Saviour, the Redeemer, "Who taketh away the sin of the world"; true Man — "after me, there cometh a *Man* Who is preferred before me"—and true God—"because He was before me"—although born in this world six months after him, as St. John well knew.

"And I saw and I gave testimony," St. John the Baptist says in this same gospel of to-day, "that this is the Son of God." About three-and-a-half years later on, the Roman centurion who stood at the foot of the cross, emphatically pronounced those same words when he saw Our Saviour die: "Indeed this was the Son of God." (Matt., XXVII, 54.)

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the Mother of Jesus was there.

And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage.

And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: "They have no wine."

And Jesus saith to her: "Woman, what is that to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come."

His Mother saith to the waiters: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."

Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece.

Jesus saith to them: "Fill the water-pots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

And Jesus saith to them: "Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast." And they carried it.

And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom,

And saith to him: "Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now."

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee; and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. (John, II, 1-11.)

THE GOSPEL tells us about the marriage-feast "in Cana of Galilee" where Jesus manifested His divine glory and showed His divine power by a beautiful miracle, in such a way that "His disciples believed in Him."

"This beginning of miracles," as St. John calls it in the gospel, was our divine Lord's first miracle, at least, the first *public* exercise of His almighty power. Thirty years He had been living in ob-

security at Nazareth in the bosom of the Holy Family His private life; now at last the three years and more of His public life had opened. His hour had come now; because He had moved the hour forward a little at the request of His blessed Mother.

How powerful she was with Him! Many have held that while she was yet a child in the Temple, long before "the angel of the Lord declared unto Mary and she conceived of the Holy Ghost," her fervent prayers had hastened by years the Coming of the Messias. Now that He was incarnate and a Man of thirty, her prayer again prevailed upon Him to move forward the hour of His first public miracle.

She said to Him: "They have no wine." And though He answered her that His hour had not yet come, yet immediately He granted her prayer and performed the miracle. How great her influence with Him was, and is! "Woman, what is that to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come," Our Saviour said to her at first. That word "Woman," which sounds rather strange in English, in the original language would be simply an equivalent for "Madame," a term of respect and honor, such as princes would use in addressing the queen, their mother, at any formal assemblage. "They have no wine," she said, and He answered: "How does that concern us? My hour is not yet come."

But His blessed Mother knew that her request was already granted, and said to the waiters: "Do whatever He shall tell you." So at His command they filled the six big water-jars to the brim, with the clear, transparent water and then, again at His command, drew out into their pitchers or wine-flasks the delicious golden wine.

This was the beginning and the first of those wonderful miracles which crowded all the days of those three marvelous years during which our divine Lord was preaching His Gospel and founding His Church. And He made the beginning some weeks earlier than it otherwise would have been, and moved forward His hour, because requested by His Mother.

What tremendous power and influence the Mother of God had, and has, with her divine Son! Wise is His Church which invokes her intercession with Him nearly every moment. And wise are we, the members of that Church, who day after day, year in and year out, constantly seek to obtain in our own behalf and in behalf of our dear ones living and dead, that most powerful influence with God, of Mary.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

And when He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.

And, behold, a leper came and adored Him, saying: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

And Jesus, stretching forth His hand, touched him, saying: "I will, be thou made clean." And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed.

And Jesus saith to him: "See thou tell no man: but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them."

And when He had entered into Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching Him,

And saying: "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented."

And Jesus saith to him: "I will come and heal him."

And the centurion, making answer, said: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

"For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers: And I say to this: 'Go,' and he goeth, and to another: 'Come,' and he cometh, and to my servant: 'Do this,' and he doeth it."

And Jesus, hearing this, marveled and said to them that followed Him: "Amen, I say to you: I have not found so great faith in Israel.

"And I say to you that many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven:

"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

And Jesus said to the centurion: "Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee." And the servant was healed at the same hour. (Matt., VIII, 1-13.)

THE day which this gospel speaks of was early in Our Saviour's public life. And yet the leper already firmly believed that He was God; for adoration belongs to God alone—"the Lord thy God shalt thou adore" (Matt., IV, 10)—, and the leper "adored Him." Not only that, but he said to Him: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." If he were talking to a mere man, to Moses or some other prophet or saint, he would probably say: "If you will ask God for me, if you will pray for me, I shall be cured and made clean." The leper had faith in abundance, and our divine Lord immediately granted his prayer: "'I will, be thou made clean!' And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed."

The centurion's faith was perhaps still more remarkable. The leper was a Hebrew, one of God's Chosen People and true believers; but the centurion was a Roman Gentile, an unenlightened pagan. And yet the centurion said: "Lord, I am not worthy

that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." The familiar "Lord, I am not worthy,"—"Domine, non sum dignus"—, that we recite so often, repeating it three times before we receive that same divine Lord in Holy Communion, was first spoken on that day by that pagan centurion.

And he went on to explain to Our Lord, in his naïve and straightforward but most beautiful way, that he also was a man (as he knew Christ was a true man—man and God at the same time), having under him soldiers whom he could command and order about with no fear of being disobeyed (as he knew Christ had under Him angels who would promptly fulfil His slightest wish or desire). And so, just as he, good, honest soldier with a warm human heart in his breast, would do or command any little thing to oblige anybody, so he had not the slightest doubt that Christ would do this favor for him.

Our divine Saviour admired his faith, even infinitely more than we do, and granted his request. He solemnly told His disciples that He had not found faith in Israel, that is, among the Jews whom He was preaching to, like that which this pagan centurion possessed; and that many in the course of time would come not only from Rome, but also from all the other pagan nations, and sit down with the Jews' great ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, while for lack of faith in Him the Jews themselves, God's Chosen People, "the children of the kingdom," would be "cast out into the exterior darkness."

Thanks be to His mercy, we are among the "many" whom He spoke of, who have come from the East and the West, descended from the pagan Gen-

tile nations of His day on earth, and are in His Church and, with His help, will be in His heaven. Only let us be sure that we have the Faith, that we hold the Faith to the end, the Christian Faith, the Roman Catholic Faith, of the leper and of the centurion of to-day's Gospel.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

And when He entered into the boat, His disciples followed Him:

And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves; but He was asleep.

And they came to Him, and awaked Him, saying: "Lord, save us, we perish."

And Jesus saith to them: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" Then, rising up, He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm.

But the men wondered, saying: "What manner of man is this? For the winds and the sea obey Him." (Matt., VIII, 23-27.)

THE adorable human nature of our divine Saviour required a little rest, and to obtain it He sailed across the lake. For a few hours, at any rate, He must escape from the crowds that thronged around Him day and night. When He entered the little fishing-boat, only a few of His disciples could follow Him; and He rested His head on the rough cushion of the helmsman and was soon fast asleep.

Then a great tempest blew down on the lake, quickly roughening the calm water, until the boat became unmanageable. And when the big waves dashed over the decks again and again, they ran to Our Lord and wakened Him, crying: "Lord, save us, we perish." And He said: "Why are you fear-

ful, O ye of little faith!" And He stood up, and "commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm."

"A *great* calm," St. Matthew writes in describing it. For even the winds and the waves knew their Master and, not gradually, but suddenly, quieted themselves as if afraid even to breathe in His Presence. But his human creatures "wondered, saying: 'What manner of man is This? For the winds and the sea obey Him.'" There were some among them who did not know at that time, or at least did not realize so well as we do, that that Man is God. If they did, they would not wonder that the winds and the waves obeyed Him.

The wonder would rather be that there is anything in all His vast creation which would dare to disobey Him, the mystery of free-will. When "all things were made by Him and without Him was made nothing that was made" (John, 1, 3), He gave intelligence and free-will only to angels and men; and far back, beyond all human remembrance, great multitudes of the angels (probably one-third) disobeyed Him, thereby becoming devils of hell-fire; and the very first man and woman at the very beginning of human history disobeyed Him, as well as multitudes of their kind in every age since then.

O meek and humble Jesus Christ, perfect Man and Almighty God, but in one Person, in one indivisible, divine Second Person of the Blessed Trinity! The winds and the waves obey Thee, the trees and the plants, the fishes of the sea, the birds of the air and all the other brute animals obey Thee, the moons and the stars and the suns obey Thee; but the noblest and most richly endowed of all Thy creatures disobey Thee.

Patiently He waits for us to cease from disobeying, to give Him our free-will and love, our human hearts. May He not wait in vain! May we die to sin, particularly mortal sin, long before we die to this earth-life of trial, temptation and storm! And then we shall live to Him forever and ever in the great calm, the eternal rest and the perpetual light of heaven.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Another parable He proposed to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field.

"But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way.

"And when the blade was sprung up and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle.

"And the servants of the goodman of the house, coming, said to him: 'Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it cockle?'

"And he said to them: 'An enemy hath done this.' And the servants said to him: 'Wilt thou that we go and gather it up?'

"And he said: 'No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it.

"'Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: "Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn."'" (Matt., XIII. 24-30.)

OUR divine Saviour Himself explained this parable. "Then, having sent away the multitudes, He came into the house," St. Matthew writes, "and His disciples came to Him, saying: 'Expound to us the parable of the cockle of the field.' Who made answer and said to them: 'He that soweth the

good seed, is the Son of Man. And the field is the world. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom. And the cockle are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that sowed them, is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world. And the reapers are the angels. Even as cockle therefore is gathered up and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matt., XIII, 36-43.)

This is the explanation of the parable in Our Saviour's own words. The field is this world, all mingled, as it is, of good and evil. "The good seed are the children of the kingdom," the children of light, all those who are in the state of grace. The bad seed, "the cockle, are the children of the wicked one." The owner of the field, who sowed the good seed, "is the Son of Man," Our Lord Himself, true Man and true God. His enemy, who sowed the bad seed, is the devil. "The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. Even as cockle therefore is gathered up and burnt with fire," Our Saviour says, "so shall it be at the end of the world."

"Which of you can dwell with devouring fire?" said the prophet Isaias about eight hundred years before Our Saviour's birth. "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isai., XXXIII, 14.) God forbid that any of us should dwell amid the everlasting burnings!

The end of the world will come for us, in one sense, at the moment of our death. From that decisive moment onward our soul shall be in heaven or hell or purgatory. In another and more literal sense the end of the world will come at the end of time, with the resurrection of our bodies and the public, general judgment. From that last day onward through all eternity our body and soul will be in heaven or hell.

May we be among the good seed at the decisive moment of our death; so that, with the rest of the just, we may shine as the sun, in the kingdom of our Father!

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Another parable He proposed to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field.

"Which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up it is greater than all herbs and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof."

Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened."

All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes; and without parables He did not speak to them.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world." (Matt., XIII, 31-35.)

THESE two parables of the mustard-seed and of the leaven are recorded in that same thirteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew which contains, with other parables, the parable of the Sower, and that of the Good and the

Bad Seed. St. John Chrysostom thought that some of the people listening to our divine Lord that day, might have been rather discouraged by the Parable of the Sower, where only one-quarter of the seed of God's word falls upon good ground, while the other three-quarters is lost; and also by the Parable of the Good and Bad Seed, where the devil succeeds for a time in planting bad seed in the field of this world where God had planted only good seed; and that to raise the spirits of His hearers and encourage them, Our Lord immediately told those two other parables of the Mustard-Seed and of the Leaven, which illustrate the wonderful growth and development of His Church upon this earth, and the tremendous, silent, penetrating power of His Gospel and His doctrines.

The mustard-seed was the smallest seed that Our Saviour's audience ever saw in their lives, although, like all agricultural people, they were familiar with many kinds of seeds. And from this extremely small seed there grew up very rapidly the big mustard-plant, so common in that country, before their eyes everywhere, growing wild as well as in their fields and farms. It is larger, travelers tell us, than any other herb of the Holy Land. Some exceptional specimens are as much as eight and ten feet high. And its branches attract multitudes of birds, for which the fresh buds and blossoms seem to be a favorite food. To this little seed Our Saviour compared His Church, which He so often called His Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God; small indeed on that day on which He was speaking, but destined by Him to rapidly increase and multiply as time went on, to spread out into all tribes and nations, and in the course of centuries cover the whole earth.

The other parable, of the leaven or fermenting dough, used then just as bakers now use yeast, which the woman buried in the meal and which, after she had poured in water and kneaded it all about, fermented there until the carbonic acid gas that it generated had made the whole mass of dough light and porous, beautifully illustrates the silent, humble, penetrating power of our divine Saviour's doctrines, which have leavened the whole world and are leavening it more and more.

So the apostles and disciples that day so long ago, the little nucleus and seed of our present vast and grand Roman Catholic Church, were cheered up and encouraged by these two parables, St. John Chrysostom thought, after having been slightly disheartened perhaps by those that preceded them. And we to-day, by His mercy inheriting some little of their courage and fortitude, have no fear for the great Church of Christ on earth, which will triumphantly pursue its course, as He promised, to the very end of time: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt., XXVIII, 20.)

CANDLEMAS DAY

(II Class—February 2nd)

And after the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord,

As it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord";

And to offer a sacrifice according as it written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the

Consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was in him.

And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.

And he came by the Spirit into the Temple. And when His parents brought in the Child Jesus to do for Him according to the custom of the law,

He also took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said:

"Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace;

"Because my eyes have seen Thy salvation,

"Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples:

"A Light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the Glory of Thy people Israel." (Luke, II, 22-32.)

"A LIGHT to the revelation of the Gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel," that is what St. Simeon Senex called Our Saviour, when in the Temple at Jerusalem he held in his arms the divine Infant forty days old. By the use of candles on Candlemas Day we outwardly and openly profess our faith, hope and charity toward this divine Light, the Second Adorable Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Light of the Gentiles, the Glory of Israel, Jesus Christ Our Lord.

"God is light, and in Him there is no darkness." (I. John, I, 5.) "I am the Light of the world," Our Saviour said to them in that same Temple when He had grown to be a man; "he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John, VIII, 12.) He "was the true Light, Which enlightened every man that cometh into this world." (John, I, 9.) Therefore His Church solemnly blesses the candles on this Feast of the Purification, as symbols of Him, the "Light of the World," and as sacramentals for His service.

Certainly His blessed Mother had no need for purification, she, the Immaculate. Yet to practice the virtue of obedience, even as she practiced all other virtues—to obey the Mosaic law under which she was living—she came to the Temple, carrying Him in her arms, and went through with the ceremony. She was obeying three different laws.

First, one law required that the mother of a boy should come to the Temple forty days after her delivery, to be purified by prayers of the priests. Secondly, she was bound by another law to make offerings for sacrifice on that occasion, a dove or pigeon as a sin-offering, for remission of sins; and a lamb or, if extremely poor, a second dove or pigeon, as a holocaust, the sacrifice of adoration; Mary was extremely poor. Thirdly, still another law required that the first-born son should be given to God in the Temple, and placed in the hands of the priest like any other gift or offering; however, he might be redeemed for a certain fixed sum of money and received back to be taken home again.

Thus, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary is at the same time the Feast of the Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple, the fourth joyful mystery of the Rosary. It was the first entrance of God Incarnate into the only Temple of God upon this earth. It was the coming of the Lord to His Temple foretold by the prophet Malachias four hundred years before. In one breath, in one and the same verse of his prophecy this great prophet foretold the mission of Christ's forerunner St. John the Baptist, and this Coming of Christ Himself into His Temple. "Behold I send My angel, and he shall prepare the way before My face. And presently, the Lord Whom you seek, and the Angel of the Testament Whom you desire, shall

come to His Temple. Behold He cometh, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Mal., III, 1.)

So in God's own time the prophecy was fulfilled; and the Lord Whom they sought, the Angel of the Testament Whom they desired, the Glory of Israel, the Light of the World, in the arms of His Immaculate Mother, protected by holy St. Joseph, came to His Temple on Candlemas Day.

ST. BLAISE

(Simple—February 3rd)

Then Jesus said to His disciples: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

"For he that will save his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it.

"For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?

"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then will He render to every man according to his works." (Matt., XVI, 24-27.)

FEBRUARY 3rd is the Feast of St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr. He was Bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, sixteen hundred years ago. There he suffered his passion for love of Christ, and there, after long-drawn-out and tremendous agony, he died for Him. "He that will save his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it." St. Blaise found his life high up in heaven's glory, at the very minute, at the very second, when he lost it for Christ's sake on earth. It is highly probable that his heaven had begun

even before his earth-agony was ended, as happened with some of the martyrs. Sixteen hundred years have passed down here on earth since then; up there, in "the everlasting thrill," in the unspeakably intense and overwhelming joy of heaven, it does not seem as long as sixteen hundred ticks of the clock; and his eternity is all before him, stretching on and on and on, forever and ever, never to end.

St. Blaise had been a famous physician and had worked wonderful cures in that profession, before he became a priest or a bishop. After his ordination and his consecration, God gave him the gift of miracles. Very rapidly he drew nearer to God, increasing in sanctity every day, so that he would probably have been a canonized saint even if he had not been a martyr. That was the case with many of the martyrs. They were already saints; and their very great holiness of life merited for them from God the crowning grace and glory of martyrdom. So St. Blaise, long before he died for Christ, was working more cures and more wonderful cures through his holiness, than he had ever accomplished by his skill and natural science in his former life as a physician.

It was the fame of his miracles and holiness, and his extremely prominent position as Bishop of Sebaste, which caused the arrest of St. Blaise among the first, when the Emperor Licinius decreed his persecution of the Christians. "If any man will come after Me," Our Saviour says in today's gospel, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." St. Blaise took up his cross in most manly fashion and humbly followed Christ by a variety of sufferings. He was severely scourged. He was suspended from a tree, but

cut down in the midst of his strangulation, before death could relieve him. His flesh was torn with iron combs such as wool-combers used in their trade. Finally, with two young men of his flock he was beheaded. Immediately afterward seven Catholic women were discovered by the authorities, soaking up with their handkerchiefs precious drops of St. Blaise's blood, and for this apprehended, tried as Christians, severely tortured and put to death with the sword.

At the blessing of throats on St. Blaise's Day, the Church prays over her children by the lips of her priests: "Through the intercession of St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr, may God deliver thee from troubles of the throat and from every other evil, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

OUR LADY OF LOURDES

(Major—February 11th)

And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth,

To a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel being come in, said unto her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

Who, having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.

"Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus." (Luke, I, 26-31.)

"AND the Virgin's name was Mary." To-day is the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11th, observed in some privileged places ever since Pope Leo XIII granted the Mass and Office; but made a feast of the Universal Church by Pope Pius X in 1907, and since then observed everywhere.

When our blessed Lady appeared to the Venerable Bernadette Soubirous (then a child of fourteen) near Lourdes for the sixteenth time, Bernadette said to Our Lady: "Madame, would you be kind enough to tell me who you are?" The only answer was a smile, but a smile so loving, that Bernadette was not afraid to repeat the question. Our Lady's smile grew brighter, kinder, more loving than before. So Bernadette took courage and said for the third time: "Madame, would you be kind enough to tell me who you are?"

Then our blessed Lady's face became intensely serious. Her attitude, her posture, became one of deepest humility blended with recollection. She joined her hands, raised them up to her bosom, and looked upward toward heaven. Then after a moment (or hours or years or centuries—Bernadette could never say which), bowing her blessed, royal head once more over the child, slowly opening her hands, and leaning forward, she said: "I am the Immaculate Conception."

So "the Virgin's name was Mary." That sixteenth of the eighteen apparitions which Bernadette was granted took place on March 25, 1858. It was the Feast of the Annunciation and Incarnation. It was the day on which "the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary."

The first of Bernadette's eighteen apparitions was granted to her on February 11, 1858. That is the day which we are now celebrating all over the world as the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. It was only a little more than three years after Pope Pius IX solemnly defined the dogma of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception. The last of the eighteen occurred on July 16 of that same year, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Eight years later on, at the age of twenty-two, Bernadette became a Sister of Charity, and after thirteen years of great holiness in the convent, died in the odor of sanctity in 1879. She is not yet canonized nor even beatified; but there is good hope that she will be, because the Church has already named her Venerable. What we might call the public part of her life, the apparitions of Our Lady at Lourdes, was completed in five months and five days, from February 11 to July 16, 1858.

May Our Lady of Lourdes pray for us! Just before she died, Venerable Bernadette murmured: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me a poor sinner, a poor sinner." May she pray for us poor sinners "now, and at the hour of our death!"

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard.

And having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle.

And he said to them: "Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just."

And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner.

But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: "Why stand you here all the day idle?"

They say to him: "Because no man hath hired us." He saith to them: "Go you also into my vineyard."

And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: "Call the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first."

When, therefore, they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more; and they also received every man a penny.

And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house,

Saying: "These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats."

But he, answering, said to one of them: "Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny?

"Take what is thine, and go thy way; I will also give to this last even as to thee.

"Or is it not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil, because I am good?"

So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen." (Matt., xx, 1-16.)

MONEY was not used so universally nineteen hundred years ago as it is now. There was far less of coined money in existence, and its purchasing power was very much greater. So the silver penny of those times, worth between fifteen and twenty cents, was a pretty fair day's wages. It would purchase nearly as much then as two or three dollars will now. That was the day's wages which the householder in this parable offered to the laborers.

Some began work in his vineyard as early as six or seven in the morning, others at nine o'clock, others at noontime, others at three o'clock and some as late as five o'clock in the evening, when they had to toil for only one hour before the day's work was over. He paid them all the same wages, the silver penny; and when some of them were dissatisfied and said: "These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats," he answered: "Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way."

The householder is God; we are the laborers; the silver penny or day's wages is heaven's everlasting happiness. To love God and serve Him in this life," that is our day's work; "to be happy with Him forever in the next," that is our day's wages. Begin your day's work now, if you have not begun already; keep at it till sundown, and the wages are yours. Whether you came into the vineyard and began your toil in early childhood (at six in the morning), or in your blossoming youth (at nine o'clock), or at noon (midlife), or at three in the afternoon (mature manhood and womanhood), or even in old age (an hour before sunset)—if you're "on the job," loving and serving God, when the shadows fall and death's night drops down on you—the day's wages, the silver penny, the everlasting happiness, is yours.

To-day is Septuagesima Sunday. Less than three weeks from now Lent begins, the big world-wide six weeks' Mission, in which Christ's disciples all the world over, like one immense congregation, are joined together at the foot of God's throne, listening to the sermons, uniting in the prayers, hearing the Masses, making good confessions, receiving frequent and daily communions, fasting, abstaining,

mortifying their wills in every way. Even if you've never worked, work now. Even if you've been standing idle all the day long, get busy now.

"Never too late to mend." That's one of the chief lessons in this beautiful parable of to-day's gospel. Child, youth, man or woman, elderly person, it's never too late to mend; it's never too late to begin to love and serve God—at least, not while the daylight lasts. But when "the night comes when no man can work" (John, IX, 4), when the darkness of death has fallen upon you, then it's too late, then it's too late forever and ever. God forbid to any of us that wretched ending of life's day!

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

And when a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities unto Him, He spoke by a similitude:

"The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

"And other some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up it withered away, because it had no moisture.

"And other some fell among thorns; and the thorns, growing up with it, choked it.

"And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundredfold." Saying these things, He cried out: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

And His disciples asked Him what this parable might be.

To whom He said: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that, seeing, they may not see, and, hearing, may not understand.

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

"And they by the wayside are they that hear; then the devil cometh and taketh the word out of their heart, lest, believing, they should be saved.

"Now they upon the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy: and these have no roots; for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away.

"And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard and, going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit.

"But that on the good ground are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience." (Luke, VIII, 4-15.)

IN THIS parable, our divine Lord Himself was the Sower of the seed. The seed which He sowed was the word of God, the mysteries of faith, the doctrines of religion, all that we now have to believe and to practice in order to be saved.

In sowing His seed, our divine Lord traversed four different kinds of ground: hardened ground, stony ground, thorny ground and good ground.

There was the hardened ground of the wayside. It had been trodden down more and more compactly by myriads of feet passing to and fro day after day for years and maybe centuries. No seed could penetrate there. It would simply lie upon the surface without ever sinking in, and be trodden upon by passers-by, until "the fowls of the air devoured it." To this hardened soil He compared those of His hearers who would have no faith at all; who would not believe even for one minute. "The devil cometh and taketh the word out of their heart, lest, believing, they should be saved."

Then there was stony ground, a rock substratum, perhaps, under a few inches of clay. There the seed would rapidly penetrate and quickly grow, but

just as quickly wither away for lack of moisture. Our Saviour compared this stony soil to those among His hearers who would have faith at first and would believe in Him, but only for a little while, soon losing their faith again. Quickly aroused, easily moved, but shallow-hearted, like the soil above the rock, "these have no roots," He said; "they believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away."

Thirdly, there was thorny ground. Fairly good soil that was; but the weeds and the thorns had got in there in abundance and had never been cleared out, and there was no space for good seed to grow. "The thorns, growing up with it, choked it." To the thorny ground our divine Saviour compared those of His hearers who would believe and continue believing for many years, or even to the end of their lives, but would "yield no fruit." Some, as we well know, keep the faith to the end of their lives, and yet lose their souls; for, of course, not only mortal sins of wilful unbelief, but also any other kind of mortal sin, plunge souls into the everlasting fire. And so Our Lord knew that some of His hearers would believe and would keep the faith to the end of their lives and yet, going their way, be "choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life" even to the last horrible extremity of death in mortal sin.

Hardened ground, stony ground, thorny ground, finally good ground: by the mercy of God may we be part of the good ground! Little by little through our little human life on our little transient earth, week after week, year after year, may we not only hear the word, but keep it; not only believe, but obey; bravely persevering; bringing "forth fruit in patience"!

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

Then Jesus took unto Him the Twelve, and said to them: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man.

"For He shall be delivered up to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon:

"And after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again."

And they understood none of these things; and this word was hid from them; and they understood not the things that were said.

Now it came to pass, when He drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging.

And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant.

And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

And he cried out, saying: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

And they that went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried out much more: "Son of David, have mercy on me."

And Jesus, standing, commanded him to be brought unto Him. And when he was come near, He asked him,

Saying: "What wilt thou that I do to thee?" But he said: "Lord, that I may see."

And Jesus said to him: "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole."

And immediately he saw, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God. (Luke, XVIII, 31-43.)

OUR divine Saviour very quickly cured the bodily blindness of this man by the wayside; but the mental and spiritual blindness of His apostles, it took Him much longer to cure. To the blind beggar, Our Lord simply said: "Receive thy sight,"

and "immediately he saw." The cure was instantaneous.

The twelve apostles (all with Our Lord that day) were stone-blind mentally and spiritually. For He spoke the simplest words to them, and they did not understand. The eyes of their minds and souls were stone-blind. He told them that they were going up to Jerusalem together this last time, for His Passion and Death, only about a week away now. He told them that in the plainest language. And they did not have the faintest idea of what He meant. He told them that He would be mocked and scourged and spit upon and put to death, and that the third day He would rise again. And St. Luke writes in to-day's gospel that "they understood none of these things; and this word was hid from them; and they understood not the things that were said."

Our divine Lord gave bodily sight to the blind beggar within a very few minutes. But it was many days before the apostles regained their mental sight. Many a time they had gone up to Jerusalem together, Our Lord and His apostles. Now He led them up for the last time, telling them that now all things would be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning Him. Like nearly all the Hebrews of that time, they would be familiar with the prophecies. They knew the words of Isaias about Our Saviour: "Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity"—"Surely He hath borne our weaknesses and carried our sorrows"—"He was wounded for our iniquities. He was bruised for our sins"—"The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed"—"He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb"—and so many other passages (Isai., LIII). They would be familiar with the twenty-first psalm,

where the Messias speaks in the first person: "I am a worm, and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people"—"They have dug My hands and feet"—"They have looked and stared upon Me"—"They have parted My garments amongst them, and upon My vesture they have cast lots" (Ps., XXI). Yet in some mysterious way Satan blinded their minds, so that even when He told them so plainly that He would be mocked and scourged and spit upon and put to death, and the third day rise again, they did not understand Him.

But a week or two later they understood. When all these things had come to pass, His Passion, His Death and His Resurrection, and every smallest prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter, then the apostles understood; then they recovered the sight of their minds.

And like the blind man by the wayside, they "saw, and followed Him"—forever and ever—on earth, and through death, and in heaven—"glorifying God."

ASH WEDNESDAY

And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face;

That thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father, Who is in secret: and thy Father, Who seeth in secret, will repay thee.

Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume and where thieves break through and steal.

But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal.

For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also. (Matt., VI, 16-21.)

WHEN you fast, Our Saviour says, do it joyfully and gladly. Don't do it in a sad, rebellious, grumbling spirit, but in a cheerful, obedient spirit. Thus your motives will be meritorious, and will make fasting and all the other mortifications of your Lent pleasing to God.

There were many hypocrites in Our Saviour's time, especially among the Pharisees, who disfigured their faces on fast-days and in seasons of penance, purposely leaving them unwashed and unattended to, as if drawn with pain or sickness, so that people would see that they were fasting and would praise and admire them for it. "Amen, I say to you," our divine Lord said, "they have received their reward." In Lent, or at any other time, be not like them. Do not fast, nor mortify yourself, nor do anything else of a religious nature, just for human beings to see you or to praise or admire you; but be anxious that God should see you—God, Who is everywhere, the invisible God, Who is in private and in secret: "and thy Father, Who seeth in secret, will repay thee."

On Ash Wednesday the Church invites you to receive the blessed ashes. She does not command you under pain of sin, but urges and exhorts you to come to the altar-railing, where her priests place the ashes on your head, saying meantime what God said to Adam: "Remember, man, thou art but dust; and into dust thou shalt return." (Gen., III, 19.) In doing this, there is no public exhibition nor display of your virtue, no seeking for praise or admiration.

None will praise you for doing what everybody is doing on Ash Wednesday, what thousands of others are doing with you.

"Remember, man, thou art but dust." Ashes is dust of one particular kind. Blessed palms of last Palm Sunday have been converted into ashes for today. So the ashes on your head is blessed dust. And dust and ashes have been for many centuries a sign of penance, of mourning and of physical humiliation and abasement. Even centuries before the time of Christ, not only in the holy land of God's Chosen People, but also in the pagan Greece of Homer's day, and still more ancient countries, the mourner for wife or child or parent, and the man or woman tortured by remorse of conscience, would often sprinkle themselves with dust or ashes.

"Sackcloth and ashes" is a common expression in the Holy Bible, denoting an outward and visible sign, commonly used and well understood, of the inward deep penance, contrition and humiliation of the sinner's heart both in life and at death. A thousand years ago when a Catholic was dying, very often they would spread rough sackcloth on the ground or floor, scatter ashes upon it, and tenderly lay there the dying form. Then the priest would say: "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return" and, sprinkling him with holy water, would ask: "Art thou content with sackcloth and ashes, as testimony of thy true repentance before the Lord now at this time of judgment?", and the dying man would answer: "I am content."

The custom has long ago passed away, but the spirit of it remains. And we all hope and trust that wherever and whenever we die, we may die in that spirit of sackcloth and ashes, passing from this earth-life with humiliated sorrow for our sins, yet

with loving hope and confidence, into the dazzling presence of Christ our Judge.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil.

And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

And the tempter, coming, said to Him: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

Who answered and said: "It is written: 'Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the Mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took Him up into the holy city and set Him upon the pinnacle of the Temple,

And said to Him: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, that He hath given His angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Jesus said to him: "It is written again: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'"

Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them,

And said to Him: "All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me."

Then Jesus saith to him: "Begone, Satan! For it is written: 'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him Only shalt thou serve.'"

Then the devil left Him. And, behold, angels came and ministered to Him. (Matt., IV, 1-11.)

THE forty days of Lent are a faint copy and a weak imitation, on our part and on the part of the entire Catholic Church all the world over, of the forty days' fast of Christ, which to-day's gospel tells of.

Nine hundred years before Christ, Elias fasted forty days; and fifteen hundred years before Christ, Moses also fasted forty days: the same Moses and the same Elias who appeared talking to Christ in the glory of His Transfiguration on Mount Thabor, as narrated in the gospel of next Sunday. "Humility goeth before glory." (Prov., xv, 33.) Fasting and every other kind of mortification, suffering, temptation and penance, when endured for God's sake, lead to glory. "The devil left him," the gospel says; "and, behold, angels came and ministered to Him." Later on, in a similar way, His most humiliating Passion was followed by the glory of His Resurrection and Ascension. "The paths of glory lead but to the grave," the poet says, meaning, of course, earthly glory. The paths of penance lead, not to the grave, but to the unending and unspeakable glory of heaven.

Under the law of Moses they used to pay tithes or tenth-parts all their lives long. A tenth part of what they owned, a tenth part of what they earned, a tenth part of all that their fields, vineyards, fruit-trees, flocks and herds produced, regularly went into the Temple, for the service of God. Our holy Lenten season is a tithe or a tenth-part of the year; and we give these forty days in a special manner to God's service. We pay tithes of our year to God. Pope St. Gregory the Great, one of the four greatest of the twenty-four Doctors of the Church, made this very remark thirteen hundred years ago when preaching at Rome on the first Sunday of Lent. Six weeks, from now till Easter, he said—forty-two days. Subtract the six Sundays; thirty-six days; just one-tenth of the year (three hundred and sixty-five days), save for half a day. Tithes of God's year we pay to God.

So let *us* pay these tithes, this tenth of our year, to Almighty God, in a special manner. With a cheerful heart and in an humble, obedient spirit let us tear away our attention, so far as our health and our duties will allow us to, from the world and its affairs and its amusements during these forty days. Four days are already gone since Ash Wednesday; the thirty-six of St. Gregory are still before you. And whether you do any severe fasting or not, there are public services in the church, the Stations of the Way of the Cross, the Lenten sermons, the Mass with its holy communion for all who will, on week-days as well as Sundays; and there are the multitudes of little, mild mortifications and abstinences and self-denials of various kinds which you can all choose among, old and young, each one for himself and herself.

"Pay what thou owest." (Matt., XVIII. 28.) Pay your tithes to God. You would be ashamed not to pay your way out in the world. Here in the church you always try to do your share in money matters. Well, then, in spiritual matters also, cheerfully, gladly, no matter what it costs you, give to God this holy season of Lent, this tenth part of your year, remembering now more accurately than ever, those sacred words which our blessed Saviour quoted to the crushed and baffled demon: "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve."

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

And after six days Jesus taketh unto Him Peter and James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart;

And He was transfigured before them. And His face

did shine as the sun; and His garments became white as snow.

And, behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elias, talking with Him.

And Peter, answering, said to Jesus: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

And as he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him."

And the disciples, hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid.

And Jesus came and touched them; and said to them: "Arise, and fear not."

And they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one but only Jesus.

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead." (Matt., XVII, 1-9.)

"AND they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one but only Jesus." Moses and Elias were no longer there. The voice from the bright cloud was stilled. The cloud itself had vanished. He had come and gently "touched them, and said to them: 'Arise, and fear not'; and they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one but only Jesus." His face no longer shone as the sun. His garments were no longer white as snow. But it was the dear, familiar, human face of their divine Master that they glanced up into, and they beheld Him, clothed once more as they knew Him so well, in the plain, cheap garments of the poor, much like those which they wore themselves.

So the three favored apostles rose up from the ground at His bidding and followed Him down the

slope. Back from Mount Thabor they went, back from the mountain of glory into the valley of tears. For the Transfiguration was not heaven; it was only like a little momentary glimpse of heaven. And it went as quickly as it came. While it lasted, it filled them with such rapture that St. Peter, hardly knowing what he was saying, cried out: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!" and wanted to build little dwellings or "tabernacles" and to stay there forever. It thrilled them with such joy that they could not bear it, but threw themselves in fear prostrate on the ground, as if to keep their swelling hearts from being over-expanded by that immense flood of joy. Yet it was not heaven. It was not the everlasting Beatific Vision of the Divine Nature, but only a short, passing vision of some little of the glory of Christ's Human Nature. "Peter and James and John his brother" have been in heaven nearly nineteen hundred years now; and, looking back, they would surely say that that thrilling, unbearable blaze of light and glory and joy which nearly killed them on the mountain of the Transfiguration, was not a shadow, not the faintest image or adumbration, of what heaven will be.

May they pray for us, still here on this earth, for us "poor banished children of Eve, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears"! One-quarter of our Lent is over. Ten of the forty days are gone. And on this second Sunday the Church of Christ places before us this Gospel of the Transfiguration, even as her Master, Christ Himself, placed before them its reality.

Let us be cheered, encouraged, strengthened by it. In our fancy, with our mind's eye, let us humbly and reverently gaze upon it, for a moment, only for a moment. And then, with God's help, back from the light into darkness, from the mountain of glory

into the vale of tears, like the three favored apostles following Christ down the slopes of Mount Thabor —ready for ups and downs, for joys and sorrows, for whatever He wills—courageous, contented, cheerful, and filled with boundless hope and confidence—because following Him.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

And He was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb; and when He had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke; and the multitudes were in admiration at it;

But some of them said: "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils."

And others tempting, asked of Him a sign from heaven.

But He, seeing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall.

"And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because you say that through Beelzebub I cast out devils.

"Now, if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.

"But if I by the finger of God cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you.

"When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth.

"But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils.

"He that is not with Me, is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth.

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith: 'I will return into my house whence I came out.'

"And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished.

"Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and, entering in, they dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

And it came to pass, as He spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to Him: "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck."

But He said: "Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." (Luke, XI, 14-28.)

THE PHARISEES publicly accused our divine Saviour of being in league with the devil. They said: "He casts out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of devils." It shows to what vile, unspeakable depths of meanness envy will descend, that they could accuse Him Whose meek and humble holiness they knew so well, of being in league with the evil one.

Our Saviour felt their savage words very keenly, and thought it necessary and useful to answer the charge at some length. First, He reminded them that a kingdom divided against itself cannot last long. And if He were in league with Satan, Satan's kingdom was certainly divided against itself; because every word and action of His from beginning to end, as they well knew, were against Satan. And yet the kingdom of Satan was lasting, as it had lasted from the fall of Adam and would to the end of time—a proof that it was not divided against itself and that our divine Lord, of course, had no part in it.

Secondly, He said to them: "If I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out?" There was a recognized class or profession of Jewish exorcists, and in that profession were many

of their own children, brothers and more distant relations. We in our day have no idea of how common, before the coming of Christ, possession by devils was. And to drive out devils these Jewish exorcists had been trained and educated for centuries back—the Jewish historian Josephus says—ever since the time of Solomon. Besides, Our Lord's apostles were also casting out devils. He had given them the necessary power. He said to His apostles: "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils; freely have you received, freely give. (Matt., x, 8.) And the apostles were fellow-countrymen, and in some cases perhaps relations of these Pharisees. So Our Saviour in effect was asking them if they were going to accuse their own flesh and blood of being in league with Satan.

"They shall be your judges," not only at the end of the world when these apostles "shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt., xix, 28), but even now, regarding this accusation. "By the finger of God," as they knew well in their hearts, Christ was casting out devils; and the kingdom of God was come upon them.

Satan was like a strong man armed to the teeth, till Christ came; but our blessed Lord and almighty God, the Second Person, was "a stronger than he," Who wrenched away his armor and released his captives and "distributed his spoils." Yet his power, though greatly curtailed since the passion of Christ, is still formidable. Let us ever resist it bravely and constantly, not only in Lent, but also all through our lives, even to the victory and triumph of a holy death.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias.

And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw the miracles which He did on them that were diseased.

Jesus therefore went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand.

When Jesus therefore had lifted up His eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to Him, He said to Philip: "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

And this He said to try him; for He Himself knew what He would do.

Philip answered Him: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little."

One of His disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to Him:

"There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many?"

Then Jesus said: "Make the men sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand.

And Jesus took the loaves: and when He had given thanks, He distributed to them that were sat down. In like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would.

And when they were filled, He said to His disciples: "Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost."

They gathered up therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten.

Now those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: "This is of a truth the prophet, that is to come into the world."

Jesus therefore, when He knew that they would come to take Him by force and make Him king, fled again into the mountain Himself alone. (John, VI, 1-15.)

SOME think that Judas was not present when our divine Saviour said to Philip: "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Because Judas was the treasurer of the twelve apostles, he carried the purse, and in all likelihood had more financial talent than the other eleven—even than St. Matthew, who had been a tax-collector. And so, if he were present, they think, he would have been consulted about the buying of bread.

There is an opinion, supported by a few good authorities, that Judas was not present, either, at the Institution of the Holy Eucharist on Holy Thursday night, but that he had gone out to betray his Master before the Institution. But the common opinion is that he did not leave the supper-room until after the Institution of the Holy Eucharist; and therefore that Judas Iscariot was the first in the world's history to make a sacrilegious Communion, and the example and model of all the others.

Our divine Saviour's feeding of five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes which He multiplied, using His divine power of creation out of nothing, or in some other way, was only a small miracle compared with the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. For in this latter, without multiplying Himself, and without leaving heaven, where He always is since His Ascension, He makes Himself present, body, blood, soul and Godhead, on millions of tongues and in millions of bosoms, in millions of tabernacles and on millions of altars, at one and the same time. And to our little human minds it seems immensely more wonderful and vastly higher above the powers and laws of nature, for Him to multiply His Presence in this way without multiplying Himself, than for Him to multiply loaves and fishes.

However, neither the one nor the other astonishes us to such a great extent, as the multiplication of the loaves and fishes astonished the multitudes that day upon the mountain. Because we know that He is God; and they did not know. They saw in Him at that time only a man, only a human being like themselves; a prophet? yes, a very great prophet, an extraordinary miracle-worker, a man of most wonderful powers; yet only a man.

But we, thanks be to His infinite mercy—we know Him as He truly is—the Infinite Spirit, without beginning or end, present in everything and everywhere, boundless in power, knowledge, holiness, justice, mercy—Almighty God, the one, indivisible Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God and true Man—Jesus Christ our Lord.

PASSION SUNDAY

"Which of you shall convince Me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe Me?

"He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God."

The Jews therefore answered and said to Him: "Do we not say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"

Jesus answered: "I have not a devil; but I honor My Father, and you have dishonored Me.

"But I seek not My own glory: there is One that seeketh and judgeth.

"Amen, amen, I say to you: If any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever."

The Jews therefore said: "Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: 'If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death forever.'

"Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself?"

Jesus answered: "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father that glorifieth Me, of Whom you say that He is your God.

"And you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I shall say that I know Him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know Him, and do keep His word.

"Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it, and was glad."

The Jews therefore said to Him: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"

Jesus said to them: "Amen, amen, I say to you: Before Abraham was made, I am."

They took up stones therefore to cast at Him. But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple. (John, VIII, 46-59.)

PASSION Sunday opens up for us the two weeks of the Passiontide: first, this coming week, called by the Church "Passion Week," or the Week of the Passion; and, secondly, that other greater and more solemn week which follows it, beginning with Palm Sunday, named Holy Week, and in the Latin of the Church the "Great Week," or rather the "Very Great Week." Thus, from to-day until Easter Sunday the Church Universal is making a very solemn fortnight's commemoration of the Passion, Death and Burial of her divine Founder.

Divine He is, and human, true Man, and true God, yet always one Person, always the one adorable, indivisible, Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Two natures in one Person—that is our divine Lord. In you and in me one nature and one person; in each one of the saints, and the Blessed Virgin herself, one nature and one person; but two natures and one Person in our divine Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ. His divine nature had no beginning; it always was and always will be; it is the one divine nature of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. His human nature began nineteen hundred years ago, when He united to His Person forever and ever, and through His Person to His divine nature, a human body and a human soul.

It was in His human nature that He suffered and died. The divine nature could neither suffer nor die; but the divine Second Person in His human nature suffered His passion and died His death for us. During the short time that He was dead (in His human nature), the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity (always everywhere in His divine nature), was in the sepulcher, where His divine nature was still united with the adorable dead body from which His soul had separated; He was also in Limbo where His divine nature was still united with His human soul; He was dead, in His human nature, from Good Friday till Easter Sunday, but of course always alive, in His divine nature.

"I am Alpha and Omega," He said to His beloved disciple St. John more than sixty years after His Ascension, when St. John, a very old man, was in cruel exile on the island of Patmos—"I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb." (Apoc., XXII, 13, 14.) "His face was as the sun shineth in his power," St. John writes in the Apocalypse. "And when I had seen Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying: 'Fear not. I am the First and the Last, and alive, and was dead, and, behold, I am living forever and ever.'" (Apoc., I, 16-18.)

And just as plainly did He proclaim Himself

Almighty God to those wretched, unbelieving scribes of to-day's gospel. They said to Him: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Now, Abraham was dead more than seventeen hundred years at that time. "Jesus said to them: 'Amen, amen, I say to you: Before Abraham was made, I am.'"

To-day the Church places this gospel in the Mass, to-day at the beginning of the Passiontide; that during this solemn fortnight we may realize even better than ever, if possible, Who and What He is Who has suffered so bitterly and descended so low for us.

THE SEVEN DOLORS

(Major—Friday after Passion Sunday)

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen.

When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His Mother: "Woman, behold thy son."

After that, He saith to the disciple: "Behold thy Mother." And from that hour the disciple took her to his own. (John, XIX, 25-27.)

THE CRUCIFIXION and Death of Our Saviour, the fifth of the seven great sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, was probably the worst of the seven. The gospel of the Seven Dolors, just now read to you, speaks about the Crucifixion, without mentioning the other six.

"There stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother." What a picture of woe St. John the Evangelist,

inspired by the Holy Ghost, paints for us in those nine short words! "The sorrowful Mother stood near the cross, tearful while her Son was hanging upon it." "Stabat Mater dolorosa juxta crucem lachrymosa dum pendebat Filius." What an epic of grief, what a tragedy of rending sorrow for Mary!

She loved her divine and human Son immensely more than any other mother has ever loved her child. She would not be the Queen of saints if she were not also the Queen of mothers. Add together the holiness and glory of all the angels and saints in heaven, and it does not equal Mary's holiness and glory; add together the love of all the mothers on earth, and it does not equal Mary's love. Now, the greater the love, the greater the holiness and the greater the glory in heaven; so likewise, the greater the love, the greater the sorrow and the sharper the anguish on Calvary. When we properly think of it we can almost realize, what we know is the literal truth, that Mary is not only a martyr, but the Queen of martyrs.

Her martyrdom culminated on Calvary. That was the highest point of her sacrifice and the apex of her pain and woe. But her martyrdom began from the moment of the Annunciation and the Incarnation and lasted to the moment of her death. To realize that in her womb, incarnate, was the God of infinite holiness, and to know that in the city all around them were thousands of His enemies, people in mortal sin, subjects of Satan His deadly foe—that was anguish for His Mother, even as for Him. Much as they loved sinners—He came to die for them, she lived to suffer and to pray for them—to be near to sin was silent and patient agony. Some of the saints could detect unconfessed mortal sin by

looking at a face or even by standing or sitting near a person; and Mary's penetration and spiritual instinct were vastly keener than theirs.

In the Holy House itself there was no sin. Actual sin, either mortal or venial, had never touched St. Joseph. Neither actual sin nor original sin had even breathed upon Mary. And when Jesus was born at Bethlehem, and she could hold Him to her immaculate bosom with her sinless arms, there was great relief in that. Yet—Bethlehem or Jerusalem or Egypt or Nazareth—wherever they went—mortal sin was only too near them, with the intense grief and pain which its presence or nearness constantly caused to Jesus and to Mary.

So Mary's life was filled with uninterrupted pain and sorrow. Out of her innumerable dolors, it is only seven of the greatest which the Church commemorates and reverences to-day: first, the prophecy of Simeon—"and thine own soul a sword shall pierce" (Luke, II, 35)—; secondly, the flight into Egypt; thirdly, the three days' separation from Christ in Jerusalem; fourthly, her meeting with Him on the way of the cross; fifthly, the Crucifixion and Death of Our Saviour; sixthly, the piercing of His sacred side and the removal of His adorable dead body from the cross; and, seventhly, the burial.

May this great Queen of martyrs ever intercede for us in her heavenly glory; for her divine Son gave us to her, with St. John the Beloved, when He said to her from the cross where He was dying: "Woman, behold thy son": and to St. John (and us): "Behold thy Mother!"

PALM SUNDAY

(Gospel of the Palms)

And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem and were come to Bethphage unto Mount Olivet, then Jesus sent two disciples,

Saying to them: "Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her: loose them and bring them to Me.

"And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them; and forthwith he will let them go."

Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

"Tell ye the daughter of Sion: Behold, thy King cometh to thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke."

And the disciples, going, did as Jesus commanded them.

And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon.

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut boughs from the trees and strewed them in the way.

And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." (Matt., XXI, 1-9.)

"BEHOLD, thy King cometh to thee!" We Americans do not know what it is to have a king. The enthusiastic devotion mingled with reverence which the loyal multitudes in monarchical countries give to their king, we have never experienced. Judea for centuries, and during the most prosperous period of its history, had been a kingdom. And the most glorious by far of all its kings was David, from whom Our Lord Jesus Christ was directly descended through His Blessed Mother. The golden age of

Jewish history was the reign of David, with the reign of Solomon, his son and successor, about one thousand years before the time of Christ. Through that thousand years the Chosen People had never forgotten David. Even down to our time, through twenty-nine hundred years, the Hebrews have never forgotten him. The thought of David, the name of David, stirs them even now, as the name of Washington or Lincoln elevates us. And even now, after nearly three thousand years, David in their estimation is the glory of Israel.

The people knew that Our Lord Jesus Christ was descended from David. Often they called Him the Son of David. "Son of David, have mercy on us," the blind men whom He cured, entreated on many occasions, and the woman of Canaan; and the very children who thronged into the Temple, cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Matt., XXI, 15.) Many of them also knew well by this time that He was the Messias; and the Messias, according to their prophecies, must be the Son of David.

So on that Sunday so long ago, only five days before His bitter passion, the Spirit of God seized upon the multitudes, and they accompanied Him, their Messias-King, up to Jerusalem in triumph. Many of those who were crying "Hosanna!" to-day, would be shouting "Crucify him!" next Friday, possessed by a different spirit. But to-day the good and the bad, the believers and the unbelievers, were all swayed together by national feelings, and sentiments of patriotism, and religious enthusiasm for the Messias-King; "and a very great multitude spread their garments" on the road as a carpet for Him to pass over; and they cut down green boughs from the palm-trees and olive-trees and fig-trees, and strewed them in His path; and they surged in

immense crowds before Him and behind Him to the gates and through the gates of Jerusalem, crying out: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

"Go through, go through the gates," Isaias had written eight centuries before; "prepare the way for the people, make the road smooth, pick out the stones. . . . Tell the daughter of Sion: Behold, thy Saviour cometh: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him." (Isai., LXII, 10, 11.) And five centuries before, God said through the prophet Zachary: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion! Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour! He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And I will destroy the chariot out of Ephraem and the horse out of Jerusalem, and the bow for war shall be broken. And He shall speak peace to the Gentiles, and His power shall be from sea to sea, and from the rivers even to the end of the earth!" (Zach., IX, 9, 10.) And David himself, the Prophet-King, probably had this day of palms in his prophetic vision when he sang in the one hundred and seventeenth psalm: "The Stone Which the builders rejected, the Same is become the Head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein. O Lord, save me! O Lord, give good success! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (Ps., CXVII, 22-26.)

PALM SUNDAY

("Altera Autem Die")

And the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate,

Saying: "Sir, we have remembered that that Seducer said while He was yet alive: 'After three days I will rise again.'

"Command therefore the sepulcher to be guarded until the third day; lest perhaps His disciples come and steal Him away, and say to the people: 'He is risen from the dead'; and the last error shall be worse than the first."

Pilate sayeth to them: "You have a guard; go, guard it as you know."

And they, departing, made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards." (Matt., XXVII, 62-66.)

THE next day, which followed the Day of Preparation," was Saturday—what we now call Easter Saturday and Holy Saturday—the day after Our Saviour's Crucifixion. Friday was the Day of Preparation for the Passover Sabbath; and Saturday, that is, from sunset Friday till sunset Saturday, was the Sabbath.

The sacred words I have just now read to you are the closing words of St. Matthew's history of the passion. Instead of simply writing "And on the Sabbath," he writes "And the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation," because that Sabbath seemed to him as though it were not a Sabbath. He wrote his history of Jesus Christ about six years after Our Saviour's Ascension into heaven; and long before then, the Pope, St. Peter, and the other apostles and Christians, were keeping the Sunday instead of the Saturday as the Lord's Day. So the "Sabbath" seemed of little account to St.

Matthew the Evangelist; while that Day of Preparation, that Good Friday, that day of Our Redeemer's Atonement and of our salvation, seemed to him, as he looked back to it, even as it does to us, of tremendous, overwhelming importance.

"The chief priests and the Pharisees" continued wreaking their savage hatred upon our blessed Saviour, even after His death and burial. "Sir," they said to Pontius Pilate the Governor, "we have remembered that that seducer said while He was yet alive: 'After three days I will rise again.'" Not content with inflicting torture and disgrace upon Him at His death, they slandered and blackened His memory after His death. While He was slowly dying, they sat there gloating over His agony, mocking Him and "wagging their heads at Him." (Matt., XXVII, 39.) That word "wagging" (in the present participle) occurs only three times in the entire Holy Bible. Once the Old Testament tells us of Tobias' dog "fawning and wagging his tail." (Tob., XI, 9.) And twice the New Testament tells of the chief priests and "those that passed by" mocking and "wagging their heads" at Our Saviour on the cross (Matt. and Mark). And when He was dead and buried, they publicly and brazenly branded Him as a "seducer." And they sealed His sepulcher and placed their soldiers on guard about it, lest His disciples should "come and *steal* Him away, and say to the people: 'He is risen from the dead.'"

So His sacred passion was complete. In life and in death He had suffered from them, and from the devils who moved them, about all that human and diabolical envy and hatred could possibly devise.

During this coming week, united closely with His Church, we are going to make a very solemn commemoration of that holy passion of Our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ. May His Sacred Heart, Which stopped beating on Good Friday and started again on Easter Sunday, draw us to Him, and hold us in Him, for time and eternity!

HOLY THURSDAY

Before the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.

And when supper was done (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him),

Knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and goeth to God,

He riseth from supper and layeth aside His garments and, having taken a towel, girded Himself.

After that, He putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.

He cometh therefore to Simon Peter. And Peter saith to Him: "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?"

Jesus answered and said to him: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

Peter saith to Him: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus answered him: "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me."

Simon Peter saith to Him: "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and head!"

Jesus saith to him: "He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean. But not all."

For He knew who he was that would betray Him, therefore He said: "You are not all clean."

Then after He had washed their feet and taken His

garments, being sat down again, He said to them: "Know you what I have done to you?

"You call Me Master and Lord; and you say well, for so I am.

"If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example; that as I have done to you, so you do also." (John XIII, 1-15.)

IT WAS on Holy Thursday night, the last night of His mortal life, the night on which He also instituted the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, that Jesus washed His disciples' feet. It was the beautiful clean hands of Our Lord, which the next day, all soiled and disfigured, would be dripping blood from around the nails on the cross—which that very night took bread and the cup of wine and, having made them His body and blood, gave them to the disciples and to you and to me and to everybody (to the end of the world) who would care enough for Him to receive them—it was these loving hands of Christ, that washed His disciples' feet. It was the lips and the tongue of the God of heaven which out of the brimming love of His sacred human Heart, overflowing on that last night with His love for them and us, spoke to them and to us those words of melting love, so meek and humble: "You call Me Master and Lord; and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example; that as I have done to you, so you do also."

May we follow that example better and better the longer we live on this earth, if not by the washing of feet, well then in the scores and hundreds of

other ways in which we can show our love for one another, and thus prove our love for Him.

The washing of feet is not nearly so common or customary or necessary with us, as it was with the Jews of nineteen hundred years ago. They wore no stockings, but walked either barefoot or in sandals. They rode hardly ever, but walked everywhere and always. Their streets and roads were dirtier than ours. Every time they entered a house they must wash their feet. The basins were all ready everywhere with towels and abundant water, even in the poorest houses. It was almost an hourly practice with them. They were people of clean habits; but no matter how clean otherwise, their feet would be constantly soiled unless when they stayed within doors. Our divine Lord said to St. Peter that clean people only needed to wash their feet in order to be wholly clean. "'And you are clean, but not all.' For he knew who he was that would betray Him, therefore He said: 'You are not all clean.'"

"Knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." The Apostles that night represented to Him not only themselves, but us as well. When He washed their feet, and still more when He gave Himself to them in holy communion, He was thinking, not of them alone, but of us also, and of all, for whom the next day He would die. He saw each one of us that night as clearly as He saw the apostles. For He is not only man, but also God, the Infinite Being, Who knows all things and sees all things, and is everywhere in space and everywhere in time, with no past and no future, but the everlasting present—to Whom millions of millions are just the same as one—Who has no parts, and cannot

divide either Himself or His love, but gives Himself and His love whole and entire wherever He gives it at all.

His love for us claims, demands and compels our love for Him. We *must* love Him, or we are freaks and monsters rather than human beings. And we cannot love Him without loving His, without loving one another. "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, Whom He seeth not?" (I, John, IV, 20.)

"For I have given you an example," He said on that solemn night of parting, as He sat down again after drying their feet. "For I have given you an example; that as I have done to you, so you do also."

GOOD FRIDAY

("Post Haec Autem")

And after these things, Joseph of Arimathea (because he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave leave. He came therefore and took away the body of Jesus.

And Nicodemus also came—he who at first came to Jesus by night—bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

They took therefore the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Now there was in the place where He was crucified a garden, and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein no man yet had been laid.

There therefore, because of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus; because the sepulcher was nigh at hand. (John XIX, 38-42.)

ST. JOSEPH of Arimathea and St. Nicodemus had the honor and glory of taking down from the holy cross and burying the adorable body of our divine Lord. It was a hurried funeral. It had to be quickly done, because at sunset on Friday the great Sabbath began, and very strict laws prohibited all kinds of work, even the burying of the dead, on the Sabbath. Providentially, St. Joseph of Arimathea had a sepulcher of his own, hewed out of the rock in a garden that belonged to him, only forty steps or so from Mount Calvary. It was new and entirely clean. No one as yet had been buried in it. He and St. Nicodemus had quickly purchased the necessary spices and linen cloths. Coffins were not used at all, either for rich or poor. The custom was to close the eyes and jaws, to wash the body and anoint it with precious, perfumed ointments, to bind the hands and feet with linen ligatures and the head with a linen napkin, and finally to roll the body up in large linen cloths with aloes and myrrh and other spices sprinkled plentifully in between the folds. And thus, accompanied by the Mother of Sorrows and the Beloved Disciple and St. Mary Magdalen and a few others, St. Joseph of Arimathea and St. Nicodemus laid the body of Christ in the sepulcher.

It was an outraged and greatly disfigured body which they took down from the cross. "There is no beauty in Him nor comeliness," the prophet had wailed eight hundred years before. "Despised and the most abject of men," "wounded for our iniquities," "bruised for our sins" (Isai., LIII, 2, 3, 5); His hair clotted with blood from the thorns in His brow, his eyes blinded by it; His face blackened and swollen from the blows of rough hands; His knees and forearms bruised from His falls on the road to

Calvary; holes in His hands and feet; a big gaping wound in His side; stripes and deep welts criss-crossing one another on His back and shoulders from the scourges.

They did their best, in the short time at their disposal, to compose and arrange that disfigured body, especially the Blessed Mother, who bore Him; and then they laid it in the sepulcher.

The sun was shining again. There had been "darkness over the whole earth" (Matt., XXVII, 45) from noontime until three o'clock. But at three o'clock an earthquake, which rent the rocks and tore open from top to bottom the big veil before the Holy of Holies in the Temple, dispelled the darkness at the very moment when He, having said: "It is consummated" and again "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," bowed His head with a loud cry, and died.

It was probably about five o'clock on Good Friday, and certainly before sunset, when they laid the adorable dead body of our divine Lord in the sepulcher. St. Joseph of Arimathea and St. Nicodemus are glorious even in the history of this little earth, for their work of love and adoration on that day. What their everlasting glory is in the great World —with the help of our crucified Saviour and through the intercession of His most afflicted Mother, some time we shall see.

HOLY SATURDAY

And in the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.

And, behold, there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and, coming, rolled back the stone and sat upon it.

And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow.

And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men.

And the angel answering, said to the women: "Fear not, you; for I know that you seek Jesus Who was crucified.

"He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid.

"And going quickly, tell ye His disciples that He is risen. And, behold, He will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him. Lo, I have foretold it to you." (Matt., XXVIII, 1-7.)

ALREADY on Holy Saturday forenoon we are beginning our celebration of Easter. In the short Mass, which followed the other ceremonies of this morning, Alleluia's were numerous. The Magnificat and the Laudate, those sublime canticles of joy, have been chanted. And the gospel, just now read to you, is one of the exultant Easter gospels. The fast and abstinence of Lent are also at an end Holy Saturday noontime, because it is the eve of Easter Sunday from the short Vespers after Mass; and the Holy Roman Catholic Church, the beloved Spouse of Jesus Christ, cannot wait till the dawn of that great "first day of the week," to sing and shout her joy at the victorious Resurrection of her Lord.

"He is risen as He said." He had already risen and departed from the tomb before the "angel of the Lord descended from heaven and, coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it." The angel was sent to roll back the stone from the door of the sepulcher, so that the holy women and all others

who approached it, might see that it was empty, and that its divine occupant in His human nature had risen from the dead on the third day, as He had so often promised that He would. But Christ did not use the door in leaving the tomb, nor wait for the angel to open it. Even as He came through the bolted doors of the upper chamber that Easter Sunday night, and on other occasions, so He passed through the stone roof or walls of His holy sepulcher at His Resurrection Easter Sunday morning.

The soldiers on guard about the tomb did not see Him, but they saw the angel rolling back the stone, whose "countenance was as lightning and his raiment as snow; and for fear of him the guards were struck with terror and became as dead men." The angel willed that the soldiers, who were there as enemies of Christ, *should* fear him and swoon away with terror; but he did not wish that the holy women, who were friends of Christ, should fear him in the least. "Fear not, *you*," he said to them, "for I know that you seek Jesus Who was crucified; He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid." And he led them into the sepulcher, where they saw the linen face-cloth neatly folded up in one spot, with the grave-clothes in another, in that most holy place where the dead human body of our divine Lord had rested from Friday evening till Sunday morning.

And we trust and pray this Easter Saturday that what the angel said to the holy women, Christ's Church may be able to say to us: "Fear not, you, for I know that *you* seek Jesus Who was crucified." May we seek Jesus crucified, and patiently continue seeking Him all our lives, till we find Him forever, arisen and ascended, in the glory of heaven.

ST. MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

(II Class—February 24th or 25th)

At that time Jesus answered and said: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.

"Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.

"All things are delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither doth any-one know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him.

"Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

"Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls.

"For My yoke is sweet and My burden light." (Matt., XI, 25-30.)

OUR divine Saviour praised His Almighty Father for having hidden His doctrines and His mysteries from the wise and prudent of this world and for having revealed them to little ones. The "wise and prudent" and highly educated ones of that time were nearly all pagans, just as many of the "wise and prudent" of our own day are agnostics and infidels. And it was not to these that God revealed His religion and His mysteries, but to the little ones of this world, the poor and humble. Foremost among these "little ones" were the twelve apostles, one of whom was St. Matthias.

This beautiful selection from the Gospel of St. Matthew which you were listening to a moment ago is read by the Church on the Feast of St. Matthias. St. Matthew and St. Matthias were both apostles. St. Matthew's Feast is the 21st of September; that

of St. Matthias is to-day, the 24th (and in leap-year the 25th) of February. St. Matthew was one of the original twelve, directly appointed by our divine Saviour Himself. But St. Matthias was selected by the apostles and disciples, under the direction and with the approval and confirmation of the Sovereign Pontiff, St. Peter, after Our Saviour's Ascension into heaven.

Our blessed Lady, Queen of Apostles, was present when he was chosen. Certainly it was a wise and blessed appointment. She did not take part in it, of course, nor the holy women who were with her. She only looked on, and prayed.

The Mother of God and the holy women with her, St. Peter with the other ten apostles, and a multitude of disciples, had returned to Jerusalem shortly before, from Our Saviour's Ascension on Mount Olivet. The apostles, including their Prince, St. Peter, were only eleven. And the appointing of a twelfth apostle to fill the empty place of Judas Iscariot, the traitor—that was the first official action of the first Pope. He stood up and addressed the one hundred and twenty persons present. He quoted from the wonderful 108th psalm, one long prophecy about Judas the traitor. He reminded them of the traitor's horrible and most disgusting death. "And his bishopric let another take," the psalm said. So St. Peter ordered them to fill his place. And they selected two candidates, St. Joseph Barsabas and St. Matthias. And between these two they cast lots, after having prayed God to show His holy will. Mary was there, praying with them. "And the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts, 1, 26), the Sovereign Pontiff St. Peter approving and confirming the choice.

Thus St. Matthias, who had been a disciple from the very beginning, now became one of the twelve apostles, foremost among those humble "little ones" to whom God revealed the great mysteries hidden from the proud and from the "wise and prudent" of this world. Thus he came still nearer to Our Saviour taking up His yoke upon him, and learning of His meek and humble Heart, and finding refreshment and rest to his soul. "For My yoke is sweet and My burden light."

ST. PATRICK

(Minor—March 17th)

For even as a man going into a far country, called his servants and delivered to them his goods;

And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability: and immediately he took his journey.

And he that had received the five talents went his way and traded with the same and gained other five.

And in like manner he that had received the two, gained other two.

But he that had received the one, going his way digged into the earth and hid his lord's money.

But after a long time the lord of those servants came and reckoned with them.

And he that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying: "Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained other five, over and above."

His lord said to him: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

And he also that had received the two talents, came and

said: "Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me; behold, I have gained other two."

His lord said to him: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matt., xxv, 14-23.)

WHEN St. Patrick died and closed his eyes on Ireland, he heard those words from his Lord and Master: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." St. Patrick gladly accepted that glorious invitation and entered into the joy of his Lord more than fourteen hundred years ago.

What were the "few things" over which he had been faithful? Irish souls. Millions of Irish souls—very, very many in our little eyes, but "few" in the sight of the infinite God. Infinity in arithmetic, infinity (so-called), represented by the figure 8 laid upon its side, might help us somewhat in our notions of the real Infinity, the Infinite Spirit Whom most reverently we call "God." Take pencil and paper some time, multiply millions by millions over and over; then divide 1 by millions of millions; the product of your first process will be immensely greater than the result from your second process; finally subtract these two results one after the other, from 00 (infinity); the two remainders are the same, 00 (infinity); the largest conceivable number is as far away from infinity as the smallest conceivable fraction.

Millions are like hundreds or like tens to the infinite God, St. Patrick's Lord and Master. St. Patrick lived an extremely long life; and his life was constant hard work for God and souls, such

hard work as only a very great saint and apostle could ever perform. When he finally finished his work at death, he brought to his Master, Ireland. Irish souls have poured up into heaven by millions and millions from Irish blood all the world over through fourteen hundred years now, thanks, under God, to St. Patrick. And St. Patrick's God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, said to him: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things."

What are the "many things" over which St. Patrick reigns in heaven? Oh, for the answer to that question we must patiently wait till we reach heaven too. Our human soul, cooped up for ninety years or so in a little material body, depending to a great extent on material senses, nerves and brain till freed by death, cannot even grasp the totality of earth's little activities; and will it pretend to measure or picture or imagine the vast activities of heaven? "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." (I, Cor., II, 9.) But what we cannot even imagine or dream of during earth-life will be seen by our eyes and heard by our ears and will thrill our happy hearts forever and ever in the complete life which follows it.

"'Tis St. Patrick's Day, St. Patrick's Day." May he pray for all of us from his throne of glory, and particularly for his own spiritual children and descendants, those of Irish blood. Every one of Irish blood may thank him, under God, for the Christian faith and hope and love which, as Father Donnelly so sweetly sings, "St. Patrick gave to Ireland, and Ireland gave to me!" May he pray for all

of us "of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" (Apoc., VII, 9); that we also in God's good time may enter into the joy of Our Lord.

ST. JOSEPH
SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(I Class—March 19th)

Now the generation of Christ was in this wise. When as His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with Child of the Holy Ghost.

Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: "Joseph, Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost,

"And she shall bring forth a Son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins." (Matt., I, 18-21.)

TO-DAY is the Feast of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Foster-father of Jesus Christ. According to the most ancient traditions, to private revelations and to many of the best authorities, St. Joseph was pointed out miraculously by God Himself to be the Virgin Husband of God's Virgin Mother. Then the marriage was performed by the Jewish priests according to the Law of Moses. Both had taken simple vows of chastity long before their marriage; and each of them knew, not from each other, but from God, that the other also had this vow.

Afterward when "the angel of the Lord declared unto Mary and she conceived of the Holy Ghost," she received neither commandment nor permission from God to tell her virgin husband about it; and so she fulfilled the prophetic words of Isaias: "From the ends of the earth we have heard praises, the glory of the Just One. And I said: 'My secret to myself! My secret to myself!" (Isai., XXIV, 16.) But soon St. Joseph knew about it. "The angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep," and he was sure that his virgin spouse was "with Child of the Holy Ghost." Even before that apparition he may have feared that that Child was God Himself, the Messias, the God-With-Us, the Emmanuel; for St. Joseph knew the Scripture of the Old Testament, and that Scripture plainly said that the Messias must be born miraculously of a virgin, a descendant of David, in honorable wedlock, a virgin wife, and that the appointed time for His birth had just then arrived.

"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb! And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke, I, 42, 43), he had heard St. Elizabeth say at the Visitation; and he had heard his Immaculate Spouse in ecstatic rapture answer her cousin by chanting forth the everlasting "Magnificat." St. Joseph had hung upon every sublime word of that celestial canticle; and at every word he may have become more and more fearful that in Mary's womb was neither saint nor prophet, but the God Incarnate Himself, the Messias. Some few months after this, in his heroic justice and humility, St. Joseph, the holiest human being, the holiest creature whom God ever made, excepting Mary, determined to separate from her. The greater the holiness, the

greater the humility. He would not "expose her" to public suspicion and calumny by obtaining a divorce; but quietly and privately, though it cost him more bitter agony than death or torture ever could, he would depart from that fearful, most holy Presence of God and His Mother.

At any rate, God sent His angel to St. Joseph commanding him to retain his sublime position and authority as head and "father" of the Holy Family, placed him under obedience, and bade him "fear not"; and St. Joseph remained. He remained for the birth of Christ. He remained throughout the adorable infancy and boyhood and youth and early manhood. And then at last he left that dreaded Presence of God and the Mother of God. When it was time for the Holy Family to break up for a little while upon this earth, St. Joseph was the first to go. He went to Limbo, leaving his blessed dead body in the loving arms of Jesus and Mary. He went to heaven at Christ's Resurrection or Ascension. In heaven he is high up, very high up, many think higher than angels or saints excepting the Mother of God. He is near, very, very near to Jesus and Mary. And down here we pray, and with God's help will always pray, to Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

ST. GABRIEL, ARCHANGEL

(Major—March 24th)

At that time the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth.

To a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel, being come in, said unto her: "Hail, full

of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women."

Who, having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.

"Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever;

"And of His kingdom there shall be no end."

And Mary said to the angel: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?"

And the angel, answering, said to her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy Which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.

"And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren.

"Because no word shall be impossible with God."

And Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." (Luke, 1, 26-38.)

THE CHURCH has placed this gospel in the Mass of the Feast of St. Gabriel the Archangel, which occurs to-day, March 24th. The very same gospel the Church has likewise placed in the Mass of the great Feast of the Annunciation, which will be to-morrow, March 25th. Of course, St. Gabriel is the angel of the Annunciation as this gospel plainly tells us: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was

Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women.' "

So those most beautiful words, the first part of the "Hail Mary," which Christians repeat so often, were first spoken by St. Gabriel the Archangel. He did not mention her holy name, as we do, but simply said: "Hail, full of grace," while we say: "Hail Mary, full of grace." He was probably more afraid of her than we are, for she was not his mother. Mary, the "Queen of Angels," is mother as well as queen of human beings.

But her manifest humility soon placed this great archangel more at his ease in presence of his Queen; for he saw that his reverential words of praise and homage had troubled her humility. So then he spoke her name, and said: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God." And he went on to deliver to her the rest of his message from his King, the Almighty: that the Holy Ghost would descend upon her and the power of the Most High overshadow her and that thus she would conceive in her womb and bring forth a Son, Whose name she would call Jesus—her Son through His human nature, and God the Father's Son through His divine nature and, with His two natures, only one Person, the one indivisible Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, as truly the Son of Mary as He is truly the Son of God.

To be entrusted by God with this sublime message, to be chosen as God's Ambassador in an affair of such tremendous importance, St. Gabriel must have been one of the greatest and highest of all the angels in heaven. The angels of heaven are so many, that we could not count them in a lifetime. "Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, and ten

thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him," the prophet Daniel says in describing one of his visions. (Dan., VII, 10.) To illustrate their vast numbers some of the Fathers have compared the one lost sheep of Our Saviour's parable to the millions of millions of human beings who have ever lived or will ever live upon this earth, and the ninety-nine sheep to the angels in heaven. And of all these innumerable multitudes only three are ever mentioned by name in the Holy Bible, St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Raphael.

To-morrow is the great Feast of the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel, "the angel of the Lord, declared unto Mary and she conceived of the Holy Ghost." To-day is St. Gabriel's own feast. May he pray for us sinners! May he, so influential, so high up in the court and the councils of the Deity, intercede for us with Our Lord and with His Mother, the Queen of Angels, the Virgin to whom nineteen hundred years ago he "was sent from God."

THE ANNUNCIATION

(I Class—March 25th)

At that time the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel being come in, said unto her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women."

Who, having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.

"Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever;

"And of His kingdom there shall be no end."

And Mary said to the angel: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?"

And the angel, answering, said to her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy Which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.

"And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren.

"Because no word shall be impossible with God."

And Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." (Luke, I. 26-38.)

TO-DAY is the Feast of the Annunciation, and nine months from to-day will be Christmas. To-day "the angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, and she conceived of the Holy Ghost"; on Christmas she gave birth to that divine Son Whom she had conceived to-day. To-day she said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word"; on Christmas she brought forth her divine Child and "wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke, II. 7.) To-day "the Word was made Flesh"; on Christmas He began to dwell amongst us outwardly and visibly. "Pray for us, O holy Mother of God; that we may be made worthy of the promises" of that Christ

Whom thou didst bear on Christmas, Whom thou didst conceive of the Holy Ghost to-day.

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth." It was at least the fourth time that God had sent him down upon this earth. Five hundred and fifty-three years before, God had sent this same archangel Gabriel to instruct the prophet Daniel about his visions; and among other future events, he had shown to the prophet the complete overthrow of the great Persian Empire by Alexander the Great. Sixteen years later, God sent him down a second time, and to this same prophet Daniel; and at this second visit he gave the prophet the exact year when Christ would be baptized by St. John the Baptist and would begin His public life. A third time Gabriel came to earth, five hundred and thirty-seven years later on, to tell St. Zachary that his wife St. Elizabeth would conceive a son and prosperously give birth to this great Forerunner of Our Lord, St. John the Baptist. That was only six months before St. Gabriel came down for the fourth time, on a mission immensely more sublime than any of the others:—to announce to Mary in Nazareth of Galilee, as God's Ambassador, that she was chosen to be the Mother of God.

To-day is the feast of that announcement, the feast of that Annunciation, and of the marvelous Incarnation which accompanied it, or followed it directly Mary had given her consent. To-day and on Christmas Day, but on no other day of the year except these two, at all High Masses the celebrant kneels with his ministers or servers in profound adoration while the choir is singing those words of the "Credo": "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, *and was incarnate* by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; and was made

Man"—"Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine: Et Homo factus est." For to-day He was conceived and on Christmas He was born.

"And Mary said to the angel: 'How shall this be done, because I know not man?" And the angel, answering, said to her: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy Which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.'" May the Queen of Angels, the Virgin Mother of God pray for us to-day and every day! "Now and at the hour of our death" may she successfully intercede for us poor sinners with her divine Son, Who became Man in her immaculate womb on that great day, when the Holy Ghost came down upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowed her.

EASTER SUNDAY

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices that, coming, they might anoint Jesus.

And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came to the sepulcher, the sun being now risen.

And they said one to another: "Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulcher?"

And, looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great.

And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished.

Who saith to them: "Be not affrighted. You seek Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified. He is risen; He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him.

"But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him, as He told you." (Mark, XVI, 1-7.)

ON THIS happy Easter Sunday morning we all rejoice together at the triumph of Christ our Lord. We have been with Him in His Passion and at His Death, guided and directed by our mother the Church, all through the holy Lenten season. And to-day we are with Him at His Resurrection.

He rose on the Sunday morning before the sunrise. He left the Holy sepulcher, not making use of the door, but passing through the stone roof or walls. Then after He had gone, His angel, descending in the midst of an earthquake, rolled back the great stone from the door of the sepulcher, that all who looked into it might see that it no longer contained His adorable body. Either this same angel or some other of His angels, under the form of a young man clothed with a white robe, was within the sepulcher "sitting on the right side" when the holy women entered it after sunrise; and he said to them: "Be not affrighted. You seek Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified. He is risen. He is not here."

According to His divine nature He is always everywhere. According to His human nature, the angel said: "He is not here." According to His divine nature he *was* there in the sepulcher at that moment, and was and is and shall be everywhere always. Thus, according to His divine nature He is in every part and spot of this church; while according to His human nature He is only in the tabernacle, where the appearances of bread are. The one divine nature of the Three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, always was, without beginning, everywhere. The adorable human nature of God the Son had beginning nineteen hundred years ago, and is at this present moment circumscriptively in heaven and definitively in every tabernacle on earth.

In His human nature He suffered; in His human nature He died; in His human nature He rose again from the dead. In His human nature, the angel said to the holy women, "He is not here": "Be not affrighted. You seek Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified. He is risen. He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him."

And they beheld the empty spot where His adorable human body had slept its last sleep from Friday night till Sunday morning, its sleep of death; the linen sheets which had shrouded Him, on one side; the face-napkin on another; all neatly folded up, perhaps by His own glorified hands, perhaps by the ministry of His angels—order, harmony, law and system in every little material detail even at that solemn moment of victory and triumph when He raised Himself up from the dead. And the holy women went out from the tomb again, to feast their eyes on the risen Christ Himself outside its walls, a little later on, but on that very day, some of them more than once.

O happy Easter Sunday! O glorious, triumphant God-Man with Thy infinite and infinitely wondrous love for us, Thy little ones! How we shall strive with Thy help to serve Thee here on earth! How we shall thrill with unthinkable joy, beholding Thee and loving Thee forever and ever in heaven!

EASTER MONDAY

(I Class)

And, behold, two of them went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus.

And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

And it came to pass that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus Himself also, drawing near, went with them.

But their eyes were held, that they should not know Him.

And He said to them: "What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad?"

And the one of them whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to Him: "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days?"

To whom he said: "What things?" And they said: "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Who was a prophet mighty in work and word before God and all the people,

"And how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

"But we hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel. And now besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

"Yea, and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who before it was light were at the sepulcher.

"And not finding His body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who say that He is alive.

"And some of our people went to the sepulcher and found it so as the women had said, but Him they found not."

Then He said to them: "O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken!

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?"

And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him.

And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going, and He made as though He would go farther,

But they constrained Him, saying: "Stay with us, because it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." And He went in with them.

And it came to pass whilst He was at table with them He took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them.

And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him: and He vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to the other: "Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way and opened to us the Scriptures?"

And, rising up the same hour, they went back to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven gathered together and those that were with them,

Saying: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

And they told what things were done in the way; and how they knew Him in the breaking of bread." (Luke, XXIV, 13-35.)

"STAY with us, because it is toward evening and the day is now far spent," Cleophas and the other disciples said to our risen Saviour that Easter Sunday afternoon, inviting Him to pass the night with them in their house at Emmaus.

"Stay with us, O Lord, because it is toward evening," the great Polish cardinal, Stanislaus Hosius, said three hundred and fifty years ago when he was dying. The famous cardinal, whom Blessed Peter Canisius calls "the most brilliant writer, the most eminent theologian and the best bishop of his times," after reciting thrice the "Lord, I am not worthy," received on his tongue the holy Viaticum. When he had swallowed the holy communion, he said: "Stay with us, O Lord, because it is toward evening." And, surely enough, it was toward evening for this great cardinal, and rapidly growing dark, and our blessed Lord did stay with him; because only a few minutes afterward he died his holy death.

On that Easter Sunday evening nineteen hundred years ago, the two disciples did not know their risen Saviour even when He accepted their invitation and

entered their humble home. It was only after He had sat down to table and eaten with them the evening meal, and then consecrated the Holy Eucharist under the appearances of bread and given It in holy communion—it was only then that "their eyes were opened" at last and they recognized Him.

"And He vanished out of their sight." And immediately they stood up and, late though it was, started back on the seven-and-a-half mile walk to Jerusalem to tell His apostles the great news that Christ, arisen indeed, had appeared to them, no ghost, no specter, but flesh and blood, eating and drinking with them, walking and talking with them.

But the apostles already knew; and told the two disciples as quickly as they arrived: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Already they were good Catholics, with their thorough docility to the great Father of Christendom, the Pope Simon Peter: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." He had appeared to His blessed Mother, He had appeared to St. Mary Magdalen, He had appeared to the other holy women, and to these two disciples just now returned from Emmaus, and to many others also, since His Resurrection that morning; but for this little group of true Catholics gathered together there in the upper chamber, the most satisfying proof of His Resurrection from the dead was His appearance to the Pope St. Peter, the Visible Head of His Church: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

So the two disciples, who had the evidence of their own eyes only three hours before for the Resurrection of their Lord and Saviour, now had the still better assurance of Catholic Faith, from His Church and from its Head. This latter assurance,

thanks be to God, we share with them, this "more firm prophetical word." (II, Pet., I, 19.) It is from the Church of Christ that we receive the Sacred Scriptures and all His doctrines and mysteries. It is at her hands that His sacraments are given to us. In her fold we safely live. And in her bosom, with the assistance of God's grace, we shall happily die.

EASTER TUESDAY

(I Class)

Now whilst they were speaking these things, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saith to them: "Peace be to you; it is I; fear not."

But they, being troubled and frightened, supposed that they saw a spirit.

And He said to them: "Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

"See My hands and feet, that it is I Myself; handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have."

And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet.

But while they yet believed not, and wondered for joy, He said: "Have you here anything to eat?"

And they offered Him a piece of a broiled fish and a honeycomb.

And when He had eaten before them, taking the remains, He gave to them.

And He said to them: "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning Me."

Then He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.

And He said to them: "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead on the third day:

"And that penance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke, XXIV, 36-47.)

"SHALL He that sleepeth, rise again no more?" King David sang in the fortieth psalm, referring prophetically to Christ. (Ps., XL., 9.) "Now will I arise, saith the Lord." (Ps., XI, 6.) "I have slept and have taken My rest. And I have risen up" (Ps., III, 6), he says in other psalms. These and a multitude of other prophecies our divine Lord alluded to when He said that "all things must needs be fulfilled" which were written concerning Him in the "Law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms."

He spoke of this on Easter Sunday night in the upper chamber. Ten of the apostles were there, with many disciples, including the two who had just then returned from Emmaus. Jesus suddenly "stood in the midst of them and saith to them: 'Peace be to you; it is I, fear not!'"

They thought they saw a specter, and were filled with fear and uneasiness. "See My hands and feet," He said. "Handle and see. For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have."

Even then they did not clearly believe, but were dazed and amazed, wondering for joy, yet not thoroughly convinced nor converted, and not bending their intellects in the humble obedience of faith. He said to them: "Have you here anything to eat?" There was part of a broiled fish and also a honeycomb; and to prove to them that He was no specter, but flesh and blood, He ate these in their presence.

And He said to them: "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you: that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning Me."

And He interpreted all these prophecies for them, at the same time pouring grace into their souls more and more, with the humility of mind and the obedience of intellect which accompany faith. And He enlightened their blindness and opened up their understanding, and said: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day; and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

So they believed in Him at last, all excepting Thomas, who was not there that night and who would have to wait a week longer before he would receive the great gift of faith, and would fall down at His Master's feet, sobbing out: "My Lord and my God!" (John, xx, 28.)

But Our Saviour continued to appear to His disciples for a month and ten days longer, before finally He ascended into heaven. Sometimes He would appear to one of them alone, as to St. Peter and to St. James; sometimes to seven or eight together; often to the whole eleven apostles; and at least once to more than five hundred disciples. (I, Cor., xv. 6.) Because He desired to make it easy for all human beings of good will to believe in Him, even though they lived nineteen hundred years after His time; or even though they lived nineteen thousand years after His time, if the world should last so long.

Everlasting thanks for all His goodness and kindness, to His sacred loving Heart, Which stopped

beating in the cold, dead body of Christ from Friday afternoon till Sunday morning; and then began once more, never to stop again.

LOW SUNDAY

Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them: "Peace be to you."

And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord.

He said therefore to them again: "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you."

When He had said this, He breathed on them; and He said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples therefore said to him: "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

And after eight days, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said: "Peace be to you."

Then He saith to Thomas: "Put in thy finger hither and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing."

Thomas answered, and said to Him: "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus saith to him: "Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."

Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book.

But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that, believing, you may have life in His name. (John, xx, 19-31.)

THE question might be asked: Why did St. John and the three other evangelists leave out so many of the signs that Jesus did "in the sight of His disciples"? In to-day's gospel St. John says: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book." At the very end of His Gospel he says again: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." (John, xxi, 25.) Why were so many things omitted by the sacred writers of these four inspired histories of Christ?

Of course there are many answers. One of them St. John himself suggests. If all Christ's miracles were written, it would make the four Gospels too large and bulky to be easily read. And St. John, making use for the moment of the figure of speech called hyperbole, says "the world itself would not be able to contain the books that should be written."

Another answer given by commentators is that all four Gospels would be substantially the same, if all had everything; whereas now there is variety, some of Our Saviour's wonderful words and deeds being in one Gospel, and some in another; and even in all four together, only a part of them.

Still another reason sometimes given is this: God the Holy Ghost, under Whose direct inspiration they wrote, restrained them from making revealed religion *too* clear and evident, because it was His

holy will to leave room for faith; and for faith there must be some obscurity; otherwise it would not be faith. Faith is believing. And believing is utterly different from seeing. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."

In believing, the mind is free. In seeing, it is compelled. Believing is meritorious. Seeing does not merit. Believing is rewarded. Seeing cannot justly be rewarded. You believe, in religion. You see, in arithmetic.

The mind is not free in holding, for example, that two and two are four; there is no faith in that, and no reward for it; it is so thoroughly clear and evident, that the mind is forced and compelled. There is no more of choice or free will in holding that two and two are four, than there is in breathing. Night and day your breath comes and goes in spite of you, and of course without any merit on your part.

Arithmetic has no mysteries. Revealed religion is full of mysteries, "truths which we cannot fully understand." Arithmetic compels the mind. Revealed religion leaves it free.

And therefore—not to make revealed religion too clear and evident, nor to interfere with the freedom of faith, nor in any way force or compel the mind—God the Holy Ghost restrained the sacred writers from telling more than they have told; even as God the Son for the same reasons refrained during His mortal life from doing or saying more than He did do and say. In all His words and actions He was careful and measured—always enough to make faith possible with the help of God's grace for those of good will; but never enough to force the mind or compel it—nor to change faith into vision—nor believing into seeing.

When full faith in the Resurrection came to St. Thomas, it stayed to the end. And our forgiving Saviour spoke to His converted saint that gentle reproof, joined with that sweet blessing which we sinners share: "Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.

But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and flieth; and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep:

And the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep.

I am the Good Shepherd. And I know Mine, and Mine know Me,

As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father. And I lay down My life for My sheep.

And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring; and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd. (John, x, 11-16.)

A PERSON hired to take care of sheep for a day or a week, cannot be so anxious about them as a person who attends to them for years. But if the shepherd is also the owner of the sheep, if they are his own, then his devotion to them and his anxiety for them will be the greatest of all. He will not only guide the sheep and defend them, but he will actually know them and love them.

Our divine Lord owns His sheep. He made them out of nothing. He has far stricter property rights

in us than any earthly proprietor can have in any earthly property. He is not merely a hireling shepherd, taking care of us more for the sake of wages than for our own sake; but He is the proprietor shepherd, bringing us to the pasture and back to the fold and watching and guarding us day and night, not for any wages He is paid, but purely out of love and devotion to us. We are His own, His property, and as such, He knows and loves us, every one; and, what is more, He laid down His life for us, as He said that He would: "I am the Good Shepherd. And I know Mine and Mine know Me, as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father. And I lay down My Life for My sheep."

Many a shepherd in that country had lost his life in defending his sheep. There were wolves in plenty; and wolves are dangerous animals when they hunt in packs, as they often do. There were also bears and mountain lions. King David, a direct ancestor of Christ's Blessed Mother, a man of extraordinary strength and a very famous warrior, had been an humble shepherd in his youth. And once when a mere boy of nineteen he ran after a lion and overtook it, and once after a bear, and caught them by the throat, strangling them to death with his naked hands and rescuing his sheep out of their mouths. But many shepherds met with worse fates than David, and lost their lives. Our divine Master, our Shepherd Christ, did not *lose* His life in a struggle, but *gave* His life—deliberately and calmly laid down His life for us, His sheep.

"I am the Good Shepherd. And I know Mine and Mine know Me." Collectively and individually He knows us. Each one of us is known by Christ as well as if he were the only one whom Christ ever created. Each one of us is loved by Christ as much

as if he were the only one whom Christ ever died for. To a mere man that would not be possible. But to One Who is Man and God at the same moment, it is possible and easy.

God's love goes whole and entire (according to the capacity of the recipient) wherever it goes at all. Neither God nor His love can be divided into parts or portions, for there are no parts in God; and God's love is God.

In you and me one body and one spirit, the human body and the human soul; in Christ our Lord one body and two spirits, the human body and the human soul and the Infinite Spirit Which we name Almighty God. And in the presence of the Infinite and in His sight, seventeen hundred million, the present population of this earth, or two hundred and seventy billion, the multitude that may have crossed it in six thousand years, are as insignificant numbers as seven or four or one.

Thanks be to Him! Adoration and praise, service and everlasting love to Him, Who could so truly say: "I am the Good Shepherd. And I know Mine and Mine know Me, as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father. And I lay down My life for My sheep."

SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH

(I Class—Wednesday after Second Sunday after Easter)

Now it came to pass when all the people were baptized that, Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened:

And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon Him: and a voice came from heaven: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased."

And Jesus Himself was beginning about the age of thirty years, being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph. (Luke, III, 21-23.)

THE nineteenth day of March is the Feast of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Confessor, a double feast of the first class. To-day, the Wednesday after the Second Sunday after Easter, is the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Confessor, Patron Saint of the Universal Church, a double feast of the first class with an octave. The nineteenth of March always falls in Lent and therefore can have no octave, as the Church does not allow the public celebration of octaves during Lent. To-day's great feast of St. Joseph not only has an octave, but can be celebrated with greater solemnity in other ways too, because it falls outside of Lent and in the joyful Paschal Time. Formerly it was the third Sunday after Easter, but since 1911 it is the Wednesday after the Second Sunday after Easter.

There are people who keep all the Wednesdays of the year in honor of St. Joseph. As a matter of private devotion they give Sundays to the Holy Trinity, Mondays to St. Michael the Archangel, Tuesdays to the Apostles, Wednesdays to St. Joseph, Thursdays to the Holy Eucharist, Fridays to the Passion and Saturdays to the Blessed Virgin. It may be that Pope Pius X was favoring this beautiful custom of so many devout Catholics, when he placed this great Solemnity of St. Joseph on a Wednesday instead of on a Sunday.

His namesake, Pope Pius IX, had already, in 1870, solemnly declared St. Joseph "Patron of the Universal Church." And what could be more fitting than for the Protector of Christ our Lord in

His infancy, childhood and youth to be singled out by Christ's Vicar on earth as Protector of Christ's Church! Great St. Joseph! There was none among all the angels and saints, excepting their Queen, his great Spouse, so near to Our Saviour as he. He represented upon this earth God the Father and God the Father's authority over the Child Jesus. The divine Child obeyed his commands, received his instructions, followed his directions. The whole world took him for His father. All excepting the very few who at that time knew Who and What Jesus is, supposed that St. Joseph was His father.

So the Church Universal, of which he is the Patron, gives us for the gospel on this Feast of his Patronage, that selection from St. Luke about the baptism of Christ, which I read to you a moment ago, where after narrating that "heaven was opened and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon Him and a voice came from heaven: 'Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased,'" St. Luke immediately continues: "And Jesus Himself was beginning about the age of thirty years, being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph." Great St. Joseph! After the Blessed Virgin herself, to whom we all pray constantly—if you wish for a saint to pray to, whose intercession is most powerful with God, "go to Joseph." (Gen., XLI, 55.)

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

"A little while and now you shall not see Me; and again a little while and you shall see Me; because I go to the Father."

Then some of His disciples said one to another: "What

is this that He saith to us: 'A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me, and because I go to the Father'?"

They said therefore: "What is this that He saith: 'A little while'? We know not what He speaketh."

And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask Him; and He said to them: "Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: 'A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me.'

"Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

"A woman when she is in labor hath sorrow because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

"So also you now indeed have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you." (John, XVI, 16-22.)

IT WAS the night before He died, and toward the close of that Last Supper which He and His apostles ate together, that Jesus spoke those words: "A little while and now you shall not see Me; and again a little while and you shall see Me; because I go to the Father."

Looking back now, those words are very clear to us and very easy to understand. A few hours later He would be apprehended, and at three o'clock the next afternoon He would be dead; so in a little while they would not see Him. But on Sunday He would rise from the dead and on Sunday evening appear to them in that very room; and so again in a little while they would see Him, and would continue seeing Him over and over for forty days, until His Ascension into heaven.

Or, to take another true meaning out of these

words, six weeks, forty-two days, from that Thursday of the Last Supper, He would ascend into heaven, appearing to them no more; and thus in a little while they would not see Him. But a few years later on, each in his turn, they would die and go to heaven too and see Him and be with Him forever; and thus again in a little while they would see Him; because a few years, even ninety years, is only "a little while" compared with the life everlasting.

And Jesus, about to part from them on that sad and sorrowful Thursday evening, "knew that they had a mind to ask Him; and He said to them: 'Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: "A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me." Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.'"

They would be made sorrowful while the world around them would rejoice—not only at the days of His death and burial—but also often and often during their years upon this earth after His Ascension; and not only they, but also His disciples and followers upon this earth through all the centuries to the end of time. But their sorrow would be merely temporal, transient sorrow, turned into joy again and again even in this life, and finally turned into the great, unending joy of heaven; while the world's rejoicing would be just as transient and short-lived, empty, hollow and unsatisfying, and only too often changed at the moment of death into everlasting sorrow.

And then He made use of that tender simile of the mother. "A woman when she is in labor hath

sorrow," He said, "because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you."

So short, so insignificant, are all earthly sorrows, not only to the apostles, but to all true Christians. The mother does not even remember her pains when her joy and her love overflow upon her new-born child. And to Christ's disciples, even the longest and hardest earth-life seems only like one little short throb of pain when their hearts rejoice at the sight of Christ in heaven, with a joy that shall never be taken from them.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

I go to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me: "Whither goest Thou?"

But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

But I tell you the truth, it is expedient to you that I go. For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you.

And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin and of justice and of judgment:

Of sin, because they believed not in Me;

And of justice, because I go to the Father, and you shall see Me no longer;

And of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged.

I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, He shall speak; and the things that are to come, He shall show you.

He shall glorify Me. Because He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you. (John, XVI, 5-14.)

PARTING from His apostles on the night before He died, Our Saviour said: "I go to Him that sent Me." He was speaking, not only of that parting for three days till His Resurrection, but also of that other parting for several years, the years of their earthly lives, which would take place six weeks later on, at His Ascension into heaven. And He said: "I go to Him that sent Me." And a moment later He said again: "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you."

Speaking according to our human language and in words accommodated to our weak and limited human understanding, down to this earth nineteen hundred years ago, for our redemption and salvation, God the Father sent God the Son: "I go to Him that sent me." After His Ascension into heaven, God the Son sent God the Holy Ghost—that is, God the Father and God the Son together sent God the Holy Ghost: "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you." The Father sent the Son when "the angel of the Lord declared unto Mary and she conceived of the Holy Ghost"; and the Father and Son sent the Holy Ghost on Pentecost Sunday.

Even as the Son was sent by the Father, so the Son is born of the Father; and even as the Holy Ghost was sent by the Father and the Son, so the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Son, according to His divine nature, is born

of the Father alone; but the Holy Ghost proceeds, not from the Father alone, but from the Father and the Son together. Forever and ever, without beginning, without end, God the Father begets God the Son by an everlasting generation. Forever and ever from God the Father and God the Son as One, proceeds God the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, even as the Son is eternally born of the Father alone, so He was sent down to earth nineteen hundred years ago by the Father alone. And even as the Holy Ghost eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son, so the Holy Ghost was sent down to earth nineteen hundred years ago by the Father and the Son.

God the Son founded His Church on this earth, revealed His religion with all its mysteries and doctrines, atoned for human sin upon the cross and there purchased with an infinite superabundance all the graces that will ever be necessary for mankind to the end of time. All this He did in something more than three years. His mission on this earth was quickly completed.

God the Holy Ghost descended on Pentecost to dwell in Christ's Church and in its individual members to the end of time. His mission on this earth is therefore immensely longer than that of God the Son. He founds no new Church, but simply upholds and supports, guides and directs the Church which God the Son founded. He reveals no new religion, no new mysteries nor doctrines; but, using the Church of Christ as His mouthpiece, He explains and interprets the mysteries and doctrines which Christ has already revealed.

"He shall receive of Mine," Our Saviour says in the gospel of to-day, "and shall show it to you." And again our divine Lord says in this same

gospel: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, He shall speak; and the things that are to come He shall show you."

So on that night before He died, our blessed Saviour said: "I go to Him that sent Me," that is, to God the Father; "but if I go, I will send Him to you," that is, God the Holy Ghost.—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three Persons in one God!—Whom we adore and obey in the darkness of faith for a little while in this earth-life; and Who will be ours, our very own, in the brightness of vision, and the thrilling glory of fruition, forever and ever in the lasting life that follows.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

"Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.

"Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name. Ask, and you shall receive: that your joy may be full.

"These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father.

"In that day you shall ask in My name: and I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you:

"For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came out from God.

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and I go to the Father."

His disciples say to Him: "Behold now Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb.

"Now we know that Thou knowest all things, and Thou needest not that any man should ask Thee. By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." (John, XVI, 23-30.)

"AMEN, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you." Our Saviour was talking to the apostles that solemn night before He died, when He spoke those consoling words; but He was also talking to us. "Amen, amen, I say to *you*"—the apostles represented not only themselves, but us as well; they stood for us, and for all of Christ's disciples upon this earth even to the end of time.

"Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you." Of course, we must ask, remembering Who the Father is and what we are, with proper humility and reverence. We must ask with confidence and ardor, realizing that it is not in our own name we are asking these things, but in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, true God and true Man, the eternal, almighty Son of that almighty Father. And we must ask with perseverance and patience, because any other kind of asking would not be either humble, or trustful and confident.

When I pray for things, I must not feel as if I were a master addressing a hired servant and expecting obedience the very moment that I speak the word. But deliberately, from the midst of my sinfulness and unworthiness, raising up my heart and soul, trying to realize who I am and Who God is, with trustful confidence and with patient perseverance and in the name of His own divine Son, Who loves me so much that He died on the cross for me, I must ask the Father, not for sinful things, but for things that, so far as I can see, are not displeasing to Him; and He will give them to me.

"I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me." Not only for the sake of His well-

beloved Son, but also because of His own infinite love for us, the Father will grant your prayers.

The Father Himself loves you. The Son loves you even to the shame and agony and death of the cross. The Holy Ghost loves you. Therefore your prayers will be answered. The glorious promises so full of consolation which Our Saviour gave to His apostles on that last sad night of parting, He gave also to you. God is Love. One of those apostles, St. John the Evangelist, tells us twice over in one of his inspired Epistles that God is Love, that "God is Charity." (I. John, IV. 8 and 16.) "Let us therefore love God," he continues. "Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us. If any man say 'I love God,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, Whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother." (I, John, IV, 19-21.)

Therefore even as we love God, so let us constantly pray to Him, steadily, perseveringly, day after day; and even as we love our brother, so let us constantly pray for our brother, that is, our relatives, our friends, our fellow human-beings. "Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name. Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full."

ASCENSION THURSDAY

(I Class)

At that time Jesus appeared to the eleven as they were at table: and He upbraided them with their incredulity

and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen Him after He was risen again.

And He said to them: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

"He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be condemned.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

"They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover."

And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God.

But they, going forth, preached everywhere, the Lord working withal and confirming the word with signs that followed. (Mark, XVI, 14-20.)

"AND the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven." This was forty days after His Resurrection, counting both the day of the Resurrection and the day of the Ascension—five complete weeks or thirty-five days, and then the Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the sixth week.

To-day is Ascension Thursday, "the day on which," as St. Luke the Evangelist writes, "giving commandments by the Holy Ghost to the apostles whom He had chosen, He was taken up; to whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them." (Acts, I, 2, 3.) "Lifting up His hands, He blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst He blessed them, He departed from them and was carried up to heaven. And they, adoring, went back into Jerusalem with great joy." (Luke, XXIV, 50-52.) "While they looked on, He was raised up. And a cloud

received Him out of their sight. And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold, two men stood by them in white garments; who also said: 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, Who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen Him going.'" (Acts, I, 9-11.)

In the clouds of heaven they saw Him going: "A cloud received Him out of their sight." In the clouds of heaven He shall come, as He frequently prophesied, to judge the world at the end of time. In the clouds of heaven they saw Him going—His apostles and disciples, His most blessed Mother and the holy women—on that great Ascension Thursday. This Jesus "shall so come as you have seen Him going," the two angels who stood near them in human forms dressed in white garments, said to them.

No wonder that they "went back into Jerusalem with great joy"; for they loved Him with great love, and had just then beheld His triumph. Their joy was for Him rather than for themselves. The glorious, happy heaven, into which they had seen Him ascending, would not be theirs for many years to come. And during those many years there would be no "heaven on earth" for them, any more than there is for us, but often enough, temptations, afflictions, pains, sorrows, and always death itself at the close. So it was for His sake Whom they loved, that they rejoiced with a very great, unselfish joy on that Ascension Thursday, after they had seen Him ascending triumphantly into the intensely joyful, unending heaven which His terrible passion had opened wide for them and for us.

"O Kingdom of unending beatitude," St. Augustine wrote long afterward. "O Kingdom of unend-

ing beatitude! Where youth never grows old, where beauty never pales, where love never grows cold, where health never fails, where joy never decreases, where life never ceases!" ("O Regnum beatitudinis sempiternae, ubi juventus nunquam senescit, ubi decor nunquam pallescit, ubi amor nunquam tepescit, ubi sanitas nunquam marcescit, ubi gaudium nunquam decrescit, ubi vita terminum nescit!")

Into that glorious heaven Christ entered in triumph on Ascension Thursday in the adorable human body and soul which He has made His own forever. Into that glorious heaven His blessed Mother, the holy women, the eleven apostles and the other disciples who saw Him that day ascending, themselves entered years later on. Into that glorious heaven may we all also enter one after another, as He calls us in our turn from earth and from purgatory—to rejoice, with Him and with His, forever and ever!

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

(Infr. Oct. Ascens.)

But when the Paraclete cometh, Whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me.

And you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning.

These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized.

They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God.

And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father nor Me.

But these things I have told you; that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them. (John, xv, 26; xvi, 4.)

OUR divine Lord more than once used the word "Paraclete" as a name or title of God the Holy Ghost. The word means "Consoler," "Comforter," "Advocate" also. Consolation and comfort the apostles would certainly need when their Master should leave them.

When God the Son had left His apostles and His Church disconsolate—for three days at His death on the cross, and for all time at His Ascension into heaven—God the Holy Ghost came to console and comfort them on Pentecost Sunday. He came to stay till the end of time in the Church and in the individual souls of the Church's members.

The mission to this earth of the Second Divine Person began on the Feast of the Annunciation nine months before Christmas, and closed on Ascension Thursday some thirty-three years afterward. The mission of the Third Divine Person began ten days after the Ascension on Pentecost Sunday and lasts until the end of the world. The Second Divine Person was sent to us by God the Father, even as He is eternally born of God the Father. The Third Divine Person was sent by the Father and the Son, even as He proceeds for all eternity from the Father and the Son. "When the Paraclete cometh, Whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me."

The Third Divine Person "gives testimony" of the Second Divine Person. God the Holy Ghost bears witness until the end of the world to God the Son. It was not to reveal any new religion or any new

religious truth, nor to found any new religious society or church, that God the Holy Ghost came down to earth. God the Son had done all that, Our Lord Jesus Christ. And God the Holy Ghost came, ten days after Him, sent by the Father and Him, to strengthen, confirm, encourage, guide and direct till the end of time the Church Christ had founded; and through that Church to develop, interpret, explain and illuminate the truths which Christ had revealed. "He shall give testimony of Me."

He dwells for all the ages in the Popes of Rome. They are infallible through "the Spirit of Truth" within them; they can make no possible error at those times when they are teaching the Universal Church *ex cathedra* some matter of faith or morals. He dwells in the Ecumenical Councils, in the bishops, in the lesser councils, in the priests and all the teaching body of the Church. He was in St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John and the other inspired writers, guiding their pens and protecting them from all falsehood while they wrote their inspired writings. And in all of this the Third Divine Person is bearing witness to the Second Divine Person, Christ our Lord, through all the history of this little earth.

He is in every individual member of Christ. Every soul in the state of grace is His temple, His palace, His home. Every human soul free from original sin and from mortal sin contains and entertains God the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love. He enters the infant at its Baptism. He stays in it all through its infancy, through its childhood and youth and manhood or womanhood, unless it commits mortal sin. And into those who truly repent of mortal sin God the Holy Ghost re-enters at the Absolution of the priest.

Day and night, sleeping and waking, living and dying, this Paraclete, this Comforter and Consoler, this Advocate, this Third Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity is in you. Living in you, He inspires your heart and illuminates your mind. And dying in Him, you go before Christ a most merciful Judge.

WHITSUN EVE

(Semidouble)

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever:

The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him. But you shall know Him, because He shall abide with you and shall be in you.

I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more. But you see Me: because I live; and you shall live.

In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. (John, XIV, 15-21.)

OUR SAVIOUR had Himself been a Paraclete to His apostles, that is, a Consoler, Advocate, and all else that Paraclete means, during the years He spent with them here upon this earth. And now that He was leaving them for His passion and death, He promised them "another Paraclete," the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father and He would send them

on Pentecost Sunday. "If you love Me," He said, "keep My commandments; and I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever: the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not nor knoweth Him; but you shall know Him, because He shall abide with you and shall be in you."

"If you love Me, keep My commandments." That is the great, necessary condition for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in your bosom—to keep His commandments, at least so far as to avoid mortal sin—to be in the state of grace. You dare not receive Confirmation or Holy Communion or Matrimony or any other sacrament of the living while you are conscious of a mortal sin upon your soul. In mortal sin you belong to the devil's army; in the state of grace you belong to the army of God. In mortal sin you still have faith, you still have hope, but charity you have not; charity, or love, the real supernatural love for God and neighbor, is absent from the soul in mortal sin; and absent also is that Third Person, the divine Spirit of Charity, the Bond of Love between Father and Son, God the Holy Ghost.

So Our Saviour on that last night of His mortal Life, bidding His farewell, we might say, for a little while to His dear apostles, promised them and us another Consoler and Paraclete in His stead, the Holy Ghost, to abide with us forever if we keep ourselves in the state of grace. And He Himself also would see them again—for forty days after His Resurrection—for all eternity after their deaths. "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you," He said; "yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more. But you see Me: because I live; and you shall live."

"And you shall live." Were they not living already? Yes, as we are living even now, a certain kind of life, this wretched earth-life, if you like to call it life. Our divine Lord did not seem to consider it real *living* at all when He spoke those words: "because I live, and you *shall* live." Oh, wait and see what *real life* is! After you die you shall live, with a life worthy of the name, the life in God, the everlasting, uninterrupted thrill of eternal joy and glory! "In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you!"

We know it even now in the darkness of faith—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One in Three and Three in One, God of Power, Wisdom, Love—we know it even now in the darkness of faith. Thy little human creatures, with Thy help, we shall know it then in the light of glory. But first we must live, or rather die, in the state of grace, loving Thee enough to keep Thy commandments. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

PENTECOST SUNDAY

Jesus answered and said to him: "If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him.

"He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words. And the word which you have heard, is not Mine, but the Father's Who sent Me.

"These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you.

"But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and

bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid.

"You have heard that I said to you: 'I go away, and I come unto you.' If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad; because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I.

"And now I have told you before it come to pass; that when it shall come to pass, you may believe.

"I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything.

"But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so I do." (John, XIV, 23-31.)

"THE PRINCE of this world cometh," Our Saviour said on that Holy Thursday night, only two hours or so before Judas the traitor led the soldiers and the Pharisees and the mob with swords and clubs to apprehend Him for His passion and death. "The prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything."

By "the prince of this world" He meant Satan, the foul, fallen spirit, the beginner of all sin and misery, the leader of the devils of hell, who directed and guided Judas and the others that night and the next day. At least three times did our divine Lord call Satan "the prince of this world," twice on that Holy Thursday night, and once on Palm Sunday, a few days before.

St. Paul calls Satan "the god of this world," in his second Epistle to the Corinthians: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of unbelievers." (II Cor., IV, 4.) And in another place he says: "Our

wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the *rulers* of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." (Ephes., VI, 12.) Certainly wise and enlightened minds cannot have much respect for this world, but are sure to experience a contempt for this world. St. Paul in all these epistles was directly inspired by God the Holy Ghost, and thus defended from all possible error.

The Holy Ghost descended on Pentecost Sunday to stay in Christ's Church till the end of time. He directed all the inspired writers; He guides the Pope, the Bishops and all the Church's Hierarchy in its government and teaching; He dwells constantly night and day, sleeping and waking, in every individual soul in the state of grace. He brings to those happy souls, which are free from original sin and from mortal sin, the joy and the peace of Christ. "Charity, joy, peace, patience" (you remember those sweet words of the Catechism?) are among the fruits of the Holy Ghost. (Gal., V, 22.)

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," Our Saviour says in the gospel of to-day. "Not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid."—"Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John, IV, 4), St. John the Evangelist wrote.—"We have received, not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God" (I Cor., II, 12), said St. Paul.

Why should we fear this world or "the prince of this world" while God the Holy Ghost dwells in us? "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." (I Cor., III, 19.) Even though sometimes "chastised

by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world" (1 Cor., XI, 32), why should we be afraid?

No, rather let there be in our happy souls the patience, the joy and the peace which Christ left us, "Who gave Himself for our sins," as St. Paul says, "that He might deliver us from this present wicked world, according to the will of God and our Father, to Whom is glory forever and ever. Amen." (Gal., I, 3-5.)

PENTECOST MONDAY

(I Class)

For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting.

For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him.

He that believeth in Him, is not judged. But he that doth not believe, is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

And this is the judgment: Because the Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the Light: for their works were evil.

For every one that doth evil, hateth the Light and cometh not to the Light, that his works may be reproved.

But he that doth truth, cometh to the Light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God. (John, III, 16-21.)

THESE beautiful words were spoken by our divine Saviour at the very beginning of His public life, only a few days, or possibly a week or so, after His first public miracle at Cana. They were spoken to St. Nicodemus, the wealthy Pharisee and "Ruler," who came to Him by night sincerely seeking for instruction—the same St. Nico-

demus who shared with St. Joseph of Arimathea later on the great honor of burying Our Lord.

Twice in these words Our Saviour plainly asserted His own full, infinite Divinity and Godhead, calling Himself twice the only-begotten Son of God, that is, not merely the son or child of God in any non-Christian sense—not merely an adopted child of God as we are God's children—but the natural, *begotten* Son of God, and the *only* Son of God. "God so loved the world," He said to St. Nicodemus, "as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." And they who do not believe in Him are already judged and condemned for not believing "in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."

Five times in the words of this Gospel Our Saviour called Himself "the Light," even as He did so often afterward. In the Temple, after absolving the "woman taken in adultery," He said publicly: "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness." (John, VIII, 12.) "As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world," He said on another occasion (John, IX, 5); and of course He is in the world—for example, under the appearance of bread—till the end of time; and just after saying this, He gave his sight to "a man who was blind from his birth." And again Our Saviour said: "He that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me. I am come, a Light, into the world; that whosoever believeth in Me, may not remain in darkness." (John, XII, 45, 46.)

Not to believe in Him, is mortal sin, excepting for those persons who never knew enough about Him, and never had a chance to know enough about Him, to make it possible for them to believe in Him;

and mortal sin, if one dies in it, unrepentant, is punished by everlasting fire. Not to belong to His Roman Catholic Church, is mortal sin, excepting for such persons as never knew enough about it, and never had a chance to know enough about it, to make it possible for them to belong to it. These are not theological opinions, but matters of faith; to deny these deliberately, would be "to make shipwreck of the faith and to fall away from the unity of the Church," as Pope Pius IX solemnly warned about the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

"For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not *perish,* but may have life everlasting." And "he that doth not believe, is already judged: because He believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."

PENTECOST TUESDAY

(I Class)

"Amen, amen, I say to you: he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber.

"But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep.

"To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

"And when he hath let out his own sheep, he goeth before them; and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.

"But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him, because they know not the voice of strangers."

This proverb Jesus spoke to them. But they understood not what He spoke to them.

Jesus therefore said to them again: "Amen, amen, I say to you: I am the Door of the sheep.

"All others, as many as have come, are thieves and robbers; and the sheep heard them not.

"I am the Door. By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved: and he shall go in and go out and shall find pastures.

"The thief cometh not but to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." (John, x, 1-10.)

SHEEP are mentioned in the Holy Bible hundreds of times. They are very common and numerous in the Holy Land now, as they were in the time of Christ. In that respect the country has not changed much, if any, in nineteen hundred years. Travelers of the present day tell us about the vast flocks they have seen in many parts of those regions; the shepherds, not driving them, but walking in front of them and leading them; the sheep knowing perfectly well the voice of their own shepherd and obeying his whistle and his other signals, while they pay no attention whatever to the voice or signals of other shepherds or of strangers; and the sheepfold, a space of ground enclosed by a stone wall, into which the shepherd leads his sheep at night to keep them safe from wild beasts and from robbers. Wolves are still very common in those countries, while lions are seen sometimes and even bears, that only attack the sheep when they cannot find the vegetable food which they prefer.

"Amen, amen, I say to you," Our Saviour said in the gospel of to-day, "he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber." And when

the Pharisees did not understand this keen rebuke of them, He "said to them again: 'Amen, amen, I say to you: I am the Door of the sheep. All others, as many as have come, are thieves and robbers; and the sheep heard them not. I am the Door.'"

"Thieves and robbers" of souls, who came or come "to steal and to kill and to destroy" souls—that is what the others were and are—all who have ever attempted to teach religion apart from Christ and differently from Christ—all who have entered the sheepfold, not through Jesus Christ "the Door of the sheep," but by climbing over the wall or in any other way.

Moses entered through the Door. Moses and David and the Prophets and St. John the Baptist—these were not thieves nor robbers; they all taught Christ to come, and promised Him and prophesied Him; and they and their true believers and followers were saved by believing in the Christ to come, even as we shall be saved with God's help by believing in the Christ Who has come.

No angel is in heaven, and no human soul or body is in heaven, or ever will be, save through Jesus Christ our Lord, the one and only "Door of the sheep." There is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved. As the first Pope said to his persecutors: "Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom you crucified, Whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him this man standeth before you whole. . . . Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved" (Acts, IV, 10, 12),—so will the last Pope say to Antichrist and his minions at the end of time. For so did Christ Himself say in

to-day's gospel: "I am the Door of the sheep. All others, as many as have come, are thieves and robbers; and the sheep heard them not. I am the Door. By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

ST. MARK, EVANGELIST

(II Class—April 25th)

And after these things the Lord appointed also other seventy-two: and He sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself was to come.

And He said to them: "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send laborers into His harvest.

"Go; behold, I send you as lambs among wolves.

"Carry neither purse nor scrip nor shoes; and salute no man by the way.

"Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: 'Peace be to this house':

"And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you.

"And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have. For the laborer is worthy of his hire. Remove not from house to house.

"And into what city soever you enter and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you;

"And heal the sick that are therein: and say to them: 'The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.'" (Luke, x, 1-9.)

ST. MARK, the Evangelist who wrote the second Gospel, was probably not one of the seventy-two disciples. But he was a disciple of St. Peter, a cousin of St. Barnabas the Apostle, and a close friend and associate of St. Paul. St. Peter at the

close of his first Epistle affectionately calls him "My son Mark." (I Pet., v, 13.) And St. Paul commends him as "profitable to him for the ministry" (II Tim., IV, 11), mentioning St. Mark in three of those inspired Epistles which he wrote shortly before his martyrdom, from his prison at Rome.

If not one of the seventy-two, some one might ask, why does the Church place this gospel of the seventy-two on the Feast of St. Mark? Well, perhaps because his work for God and souls was so similar to theirs. St. Mark's life-work was largely made up of that same kind of missionary journeyings upon which Our Saviour was sending forth His seventy-two disciples. Our Saviour sent them forth to various cities and places two by two, as He had more than once sent forth His twelve apostles; and the words of instruction which our divine Lord spoke to His apostles and disciples just before they started out, applied equally well to St. Mark and many other holy missionaries who worked for God and souls only a few years later on.

In fact, many of Our Lord's beautiful words in this gospel apply even to the missionaries of our own times, although the world and its conditions have greatly changed in nineteen hundred years. "He sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself was to come. And He said to them: 'The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send laborers into His harvest.'" In appeals for our own foreign and domestic missions, how often have we heard and read those most touching words of Christ Our Lord, quoted for us from the pulpit or through the press! God grant that they may have stirred us to prayers for the missions and to generosity toward them.

For the need of more laborers in the vast harvest seems greater even now than ever before.

St. Mark worked hard and long and successfully as a missionary in his time, and died a martyr. But it is as the inspired writer of the second Gospel—as St. Mark the Evangelist—that the Church most reverently and most lovingly remembers him. "This disciple and interpreter of the Apostle Peter," the Roman Martyrology says, "at the request of the faithful in Rome wrote his Gospel."

Long afterward he died at Alexandria, then the capital of Egypt, where he had founded Christianity. The pioneer priest, the first to preach Jesus Crucified in that great city, he finished his life as its bishop. "Held for the faith," the Martyrology says again, "bound with ropes, dragged roughly along the rocks, he was grievously wounded; afterward, shut up in prison, comforted, first by the visit of an angel, and then by Our Lord Himself, Who appeared to him, he was summoned to heaven."

His Feast is celebrated to-day, the 25th of April. May he pray for us, interceding in our behalf with the divine Saviour Whose history he composed.

STS. PHILIP AND JAMES, APOSTLES

(II Class—May 1st)

"Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me.

"In My Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you: because I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am, you also may be.

"And whither I go, you know; and the way you know."

Thomas saith to Him: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

Jesus saith to him: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No man cometh to the Father, but by Me.

"If you had known Me, you would without doubt have known My Father also: and from henceforth you shall know Him; and you have seen Him."

Philip saith to Him: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

Jesus saith to him: "Have I been so long a time with you; and have you not known Me? Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou: 'Show us the Father'?

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself. But the Father, Who abideth in Me, He doth the works.

"Believe you not that I am in the Father and Father in Me?

"Otherwise believe for the very works' sake. Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do.

"Because I go to the Father; and whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do; that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John, XIV, 1-13.)

THE CHURCH celebrates the Feast of St. Philip and of St. James the Less on the same day, partly perhaps because their holy bodies rest together in the same church at Rome. It does likewise for Sts. Simon and Jude on the 28th of October and for Sts. Peter and Paul on the 29th day of June. St. Paul, of course, was not one of the Twelve; but the New Testament, the early Fathers and the Church herself call him and St. Barnabas apostles, making fourteen in all who are entitled apostles in the Church's calendars; namely, the original eleven,

St. Matthias who was appointed by the first ecumenical council to fill the place of Judas the traitor, St. Paul and St. Barnabas.

To-day is the Feast of St. Philip and St. James the Less. Two of the Twelve were named James. St. James the Greater, brother of St. John the Evangelist, was one of the favored three, the trio of names so familiar to Catholic ears, "Peter and James and John." He has his Feast on the 25th of July. Why he is called "the Greater" and our St. James of to-day "the Less," is not certainly known; some say because he was a larger man physically, others because he was singled out with St. Peter and St. John to a closer intimacy with our divine Lord.

St. James the Less, whose Feast the Church celebrates to-day with that of St. Philip, is the inspired writer of one of the Epistles in the New Testament, in which he promulgates to the Church Universal of all time the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. We have no mention of this sacrament in Sacred Scripture excepting in this Catholic Epistle of St. James.

After the Ascension of Our Lord and the Descent of the Holy Ghost St. Peter appointed him Bishop of Jerusalem, and he held that high and holy office for twenty-nine years, converting many thousands (Acts, XXI, 20) of the Jews to Christianity. Then he died a glorious martyr for his Master Christ, being cast down upon the rocks from the pinnacle of the Temple when a most venerable and holy old man.

St. Philip, the other apostle of to-day's Feast, worked for Christ far away from St. James in Phrygia in Asia Minor. There he too was martyred, being crucified, and then, as he hung upon the cross, pelted with stones even long after he was dead, to disfigure still more his holy body.

It was St. Philip who at the Last Supper brought forth from our divine Lord that grand declaration of His Godhead contained in the gospel of to-day's feast. "'If you had known Me,'" Our Saviour had just then said to them, "you would without doubt have known My Father also: and from henceforth you shall know Him; and you have seen Him!' Philip saith to Him: 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus saith to him: 'So long a time have I been with you, and have you not known Me? Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also.'" For, of course, the Father and Christ and the Holy Ghost are one in Godhead, having one divine Nature and Substance.

May St. Philip and St. James intercede for us with Christ so that, even as He came to them, when our time arrives He may come to us and "take us to Himself, that where He is, we also may be."

FINDING OF THE HOLY CROSS

(II Class—May 3rd)

And there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him: "Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him."

Jesus answered and said to him: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus saith to Him: "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born again?"

Jesus answered: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a

man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

"That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.

"Wonder not that I said to thee, thou must be born again.

"The Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus answered and said to Him: "How can these things be done?"

Jesus answered and said to him: "Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things?

"Amen, amen, I say to thee that We speak what We know and We testify what We have seen, and you receive not Our testimony.

"If I have spoken to you earthly things and you believe not, how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things?

"And no man hath ascended into heaven but He that descended from heaven, the Son of Man, Who is in heaven.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up:

"That whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." (John, III, 1-15.)

IT WAS during the long wandering of the Chosen People in the wilderness, after Moses had led them out from their Egyptian captivity and before they had settled down in their own Promised Land, that they became rebellious and mutinous, complaining and murmuring against Moses and against God. "Wherefore," the Scripture says, "the Lord sent among the people fiery serpents, which bit them and killed many of them. Upon which they came to Moses and said: 'We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and thee; pray that He may take away these serpents from us.'

And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to him: 'Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: whosoever, being struck, shall look on it, shall live.' Moses therefore made a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign; which when they that were bitten looked upon, they were healed." (Numb., XXI, 6-9.)

In a letter to the Emperor Charlemagne eleven hundred and fifty years ago Pope Adrian I wrote: "Whoever is struck by the serpents of sin, let him look upon Christ on the cross, and he will be healed, even to the remission of his sins."

And Christ Himself nineteen hundred years ago said to Nicodemus, as we have just now been reading in the Gospel of to-day: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."

To-day is a great feast of the Holy Cross of Christ. It commemorates the finding of the Holy Cross by St. Helena, mother of the first Christian emperor, Constantine, in the year of Our Lord 326. And the Church gives us in the gospel of the Mass of to-day this beautiful prophecy of His Crucifixion and His Cross which Christ made to Nicodemus at the very beginning of His public life.

"So must the Son of Man be lifted up"; even as the brazen serpent was placed by Moses in some high, exposed position where the multitudes of Israel could see it from their tents all over the vast camp, "so must the Son of Man be lifted up"; that we for whom He died, poisoned perhaps by the serpent-bites of sin, may look up at Him and be cured.

Three years and more later on, on Palm Sunday, Our Saviour again used a similar expression to designate the manner of His death. "And I," He said,

"if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself."—And "this He said," St. John the Evangelist immediately explains, "signifying what death He should die." (John, XII, 32, 33.) He chose from all eternity the Roman death. If the Jews had judged Him, as Pilate told them to, He would have died by stoning. But they refused, and insisted on Pilate's judgment; and so our divine Lord was sentenced by the Roman governor to the Roman capital punishment, crucifixion preceded by scourging: "that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which He said, signifying what death He should die." (John, XVIII, 32.) And thus He was "lifted up" upon the holy cross, "that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."

ST. BARNABAS, APOSTLE

(Major—June 11th)

Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.

But beware of men, for they will deliver you up in councils and they will scourge you in their synagogues.

And you shall be brought before governors and before kings for My sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak.

For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.

The brother also shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son: and the children shall rise up against their parents and shall put them to death.

And you shall be hated by all men for My name's sake.

But he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved. (Matt., x, 16-22.)

TO-DAY is the Feast of St. Barnabas the Apostle. The Church gives the title of "Apostle" to fourteen of the saints in her calendars, namely, eleven of the original twelve appointed by Christ Himself, and St. Matthias, chosen by the Council of Jerusalem to fill the place of Judas the traitor, and St. Paul and St. Barnabas, both of whom are named "apostles" in the Sacred Scriptures.

Our divine Lord spoke those words of to-day's gospel to His twelve apostles when He was sending them forth on one of their missionary journeys to preach the kingdom of heaven and cure the sick and raise the dead to life and cast out devils in His name. Shortly afterward He appointed seventy-two disciples, and "sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself was to come" (Luke, x, 1), speaking similar words to them and giving them like power to work miracles in His name. St. Barnabas the Apostle was not one of the Twelve, but he was one of the Seventy-Two.

After their first missionary journey, St. Luke tells us (Luke, x, 17, 18, 20), "the seventy-two returned with joy, saying: 'Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy name.'" But our divine Lord could detect a note of pride and self-complacency in their joy; and immediately He warned them against pride, that source of all sin, which ruined Lucifer and the other fallen angels in the very beginning. "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven," He said. "Rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven"—in other words, as

the commentators say, that you are among the number of God's elect, that your "names are in the book of life." (Philipp., IV, 3.) St. Barnabas was one of these favored seventy-two.

Of course, even with them, their final election and their eternal salvation was conditional upon their persevering to the end and dying in the state of grace. St. Barnabas took the proper means to insure his perseverance. He did not stop saying his prayers, we may be sure, nor avoiding temptations. He was as prudent and cautious about his soul as he was simple and sincere. "Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves." Even though assured by Our Saviour Himself, like the other seventy-one, that his name was "written in heaven," he understood well that some things which are written may be blotted out, and that salvation is conditional on perseverance.

St. Barnabas worked hard for Christ in various lands, sometimes in company with the great St. Paul, sometimes in company with St. Mark the Evangelist, his cousin. He lived in cheerful hope, steering his soul carefully between the rock of despair, or "loss of hope in God's mercy," and the whirlpool of presumption, that "rash expectation of salvation without making proper use of the necessary means to obtain it." And he died in blissful love for Christ his Master, one of Christ's glorious martyrs, stoned to death for Christ's religion.

"And you shall be hated by all men for My name's sake," Our Saviour said in the gospel of to-day; "but he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."

TRINITY SUNDAY
(GOSPEL OF THE FEAST)

And Jesus, coming, spoke to them, saying: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth.

"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt., xxviii, 18-20.)

THE familiar words of the Blessing, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," were first spoken by our divine Saviour Himself, as narrated in the gospel of to-day. From His adorable lips the Church takes them, and brings them down to us through nineteen hundred years. He said to His apostles: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost' "; and then for the first time in the world's history those consecrated words were spoken, which have been repeated after Him how many millions of times in the nineteen hundred years—only the angels know.

Every morning and evening, if not oftener, you begin and finish your prayers "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Even that four times every day would make more than seventy thousand times in fifty years. And you are just one Roman Catholic; and on this earth there are three hundred million like you; and on this earth during nineteen hundred years there have probably been five thousand times three hundred million. So that many millions of millions of times

the beautiful words have been repeated which Our Saviour first spoke: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

He spoke those blessed words. He named the Father, from Whom forever and ever without beginning or end He is born. He named Himself, the Only-Begotten. He named the Holy Ghost, Who proceeds forever and ever from the Father and Him. God the Son Incarnate, standing there with His apostles in His risen and glorified Human Nature—its full glory mercifully veiled from their eyes—because the glory even of one of our risen bodies, as they will be at the resurrection of the dead and forever afterward, would blind and perhaps annihilate us in our present weak, mortal condition—God the Son spoke those words, not only to the apostles, but to their successors on this little earth to the end of time; for He added immediately: "And, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

To-day is Trinity Sunday. We have already some time ago celebrated the Incarnation Day of God the Son and His human Birth-Day. His divine Birth-day—or rather His divine Birth—is all eternity, without end or beginning. We have kept the day of the Passion and Death of God the Son, the day of His Resurrection, the day of His Ascension into heaven. We have celebrated God the Holy Ghost's great day, only one week ago, the day of His Descent upon the apostles.

And now this morning Christ's Church, and we her children with her, celebrate the great Feast of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three Persons in one God—the highest and the deepest mystery of all the mysteries of faith, the foundation of all the others—the A and the Z, the Alpha

and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End of all creation, of all science, of all religion.

Christ began with it and in it when He descended from heaven into the bosom of Mary, for the angel said to her: "The *Holy Ghost* shall come upon thee and the Power of the *Most High* shall overshadow thee, and therefore also the *Holy* Which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." (Luke, I, 35.) And He closed and finished with it just before He ascended back into heaven when He said to His apostles: "Teach ye all nations, baptizing them 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'"

TRINITY SUNDAY (LAST GOSPEL)

(First Sunday after Pentecost)

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.

"Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

And He spoke also to them a similitude: "Can the blind lead the blind? do they not both fall into the ditch?

"The disciple is not above his master; but every one shall be perfect if he be as his master.

"And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not.

"Or how canst thou say to thy brother: 'Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye,' when thou seest not the beam in thy own eye? Hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye." (Luke, VI, 36-42.)

THE great Feast of the Holy Trinity, falling always on the first Sunday after Pentecost, has for its last gospel, instead of the gospel of St. John, this gospel of the First Sunday after Pentecost which I have just now read to you. In this gospel our divine Lord bids us to be merciful even as our Father in heaven is merciful. Mercy is from heaven. As the poet says, "it falleth as the gentle rain from heaven." And as God's great mercy constantly descends upon us, so we must be merciful to our fellow-men and women. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

We must be merciful in our thoughts and feelings. We must not allow ourselves to be severe in our opinions of others or in our sentiments toward them. We must be careful how we judge other people, how we condemn them; and ready always, with the help of God's grace, to forgive them, if they displease us or injure us. "Judge not," Our Saviour says, "and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shall not be condemned; forgive, and you shall be forgiven." If we are merciful to others, God will be merciful to us. If we refrain from judging others, God will not judge us severely. If we forbear from condemning other people, it will merit for us the grace of dying in God's friendship and thus not being ourselves condemned by God. If we forgive others, God will forgive us. Even in your inward thoughts and feelings "be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

Be merciful in your outward actions. Have a heart for human misery, distress and pain, and a hand ready to relieve it whenever you can and as often as you can. Minister to others and give to others so far as you have the opportunity and the means. God Himself will repay you, and repay you a hundredfold. "With the same measure that you shall measure withal, it shall be measured to you again," but "shaken together" (to make the measure hold more) and "pressed down" and "running over." Our Saviour says in the gospel: "Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom." Outwardly in your actions, as well as inwardly in your thoughts and feelings, "be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

Our divine Lord looked with an eye of mercy on those poor people whom the scribes and Pharisees, blinded by their pride, had been leading astray. "Can the blind lead the blind?" He asked. "Do they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master." The leaders He blamed—much more than the poor people who followed them—the scribes and Pharisees, who judged and condemned their fellow men most severely—puffed up and bloated with their stupid pride till they could see the smallest fault a mile away in others, while in themselves the gravest crime seemed nothing. We know the "mote," the little particle of dust, a speck, an atom, but very troublesome if it enters our eyes; and our divine Lord was just as familiar with the great beams of wood amid which no doubt He had humbly worked as a carpenter so many years. Using a figure of speech He said to those pride-blinded scribes and Pharisees: "Why seest

thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not? Or how canst thou say to thy brother: 'Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye,' when thou seest not the beam in thy own eye? Hypocrite," Our Saviour said, "cast first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye."

The more humility and common sense we have about ourselves, the easier it will be for us to be humane and merciful to our fellow men and women. With that common sense and humility "be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

CORPUS CHRISTI

(I Class—Thursday after Trinity Sunday)

For My flesh is meat indeed: and My blood is drink indeed:

He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.

This is the Bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this Bread, shall live forever. (John, VI, 56-59.)

OUR SAVIOUR spoke these words more than two years before He instituted the Blessed Eucharist. On the previous day He had fed about five thousand men most miraculously from five loaves and two fishes, as if to prepare their minds for the stupendous doctrine and promise which these words contain: "My flesh is meat indeed: and My blood is drink indeed: he that eateth My flesh

and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me."

Our divine Saviour always insists on faith, the humble obedience and submission of our proud human minds to every word He says—our agreement and full, deliberate assent—sure now and sure forever of things that we neither see nor fully understand—just because He says them.

Faith in His words of to-day's gospel, as in all His teachings and those of His Church, is comparatively easy for *us*. *We* know that He is God. We know from long experience in what a beautiful, sweet, clean way He makes His flesh meat indeed and His blood drink indeed under the appearances of bread, and gives us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. But faith was more difficult for those who heard Him that day nineteen hundred years ago. Many of those who heard Him, thought at once of cannibalism: the disgusting details of the cannibal feast where the savages cook and eat their conquered enemies. They sprang too quickly to the rash conclusions of their own little minds. They lacked the child-like humility and the mental obedience of true faith. They should have mentally made their act of faith in Him and His words, as His apostles did, and then have patiently waited as long as He pleased, even till after death if such were His holy will, to find precisely how He meant them.

Many of them, it is true, did not know yet that this Man was God. But they knew Him well enough even as Man, to know that nothing disgusting or revolting would ever be instituted by Him They also knew that His powers over nature and the laws of nature were unparalleled in human history; that

He was One Who always spoke the truth and always kept His word, thoroughly dependable, One in Whom neither faith nor hope could ever be misplaced—nor love.

"He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the Bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna; and are dead. He that eateth this Bread, shall live forever."

"Many therefore of His disciples hearing it, said: 'This saying is hard, and who can listen to it?'" (John, VI, 61.) "After this, many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then Jesus said to the Twelve: 'Will you also go away?' And Simon Peter answered Him: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have *believed;* and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.'" (John, VI, 67-70.)

Thanks be to God, we also "have believed," every one of us Catholics, no matter how young or how humble—we also "have believed," and do believe, and shall believe through life and death with the help of His grace, through joy and pain; till at the last, at the long, unending last, believing is changed to seeing, in the kingdom of heaven.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(Infr. Oct. Corporis Christi)

A certain man made a great supper and invited many.

And he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready.

And they began all at once to make excuse. The first

said to him: "I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, hold me excused."

And another said: "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee, hold me excused."

And another said: "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."

And the servant, returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor and the feeble and the blind and the lame."

And the servant said: "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room."

And the lord said to the servant: "Go out into the highways and hedges; and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

"But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper." (Luke, XIV, 16-24.)

MORE than one lesson can be learned from Our Saviour's words and from His parables. The "great supper" in to-day's parable, to which so many were invited and so few came, is often interpreted as referring to Our Saviour's Incarnation, Redemption, Church and Sacraments. He became man for all, died for all, founded His Church and instituted His sacraments for all, inviting all to avail themselves of them. Many make excuses and never taste of this "great supper," while only a few accept His invitation and come into it.

Sometimes it is interpreted as referring to the beatitude and everlasting glory of heaven. According to this interpretation the happiness of heaven is the "great supper" to which God invites so many, while so few accept His invitation. "Many are called, but few chosen," Our Saviour said at another time. (Matt., XX, 16.) In St. Luke's Gospel we

read that "a certain man said to Him: 'Lord, are they few that are saved?' But He said to them: 'Strive to enter by the narrow gate: for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able.'" (Luke, XIII, 23, 24.) And in St. Matthew's Gospel we find these clearer and more terrifying words of our divine Lord: "Enter ye in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction! How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life! And few there are that find it." (Matt., VII, 13, 14.)

A third explanation of the "great supper" makes it refer particularly and specially to the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, where Our Saviour gives Himself as food and drink to us under the appearances of bread. The Church seems to favor this interpretation, or at least to give full approval to it, by placing this parable every year as the gospel of the Sunday within the Octave of the great Feast of the Holy Eucharist, Corpus Christi. To this great Supper Christ our Lord invites us over and over. "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (Matt., XI, 28.) All Roman Catholics are invited from the age when they have begun to use reason, if fasting from midnight and clean, so far as they know, from mortal sin; yet only once each day. Priests may receive three times on Christmas and All-Souls' Day, and some priests twice on Sundays and holydays of obligation; but the people only once on every day of the year—except in the rare case where after receiving Our Lord in the morning, some sudden necessity of being prepared for death should make it possible for them to receive Him again in the most holy Viaticum.

Very many, however, do not care even once a day for Christ's great Supper. Some are really hindered by their duties or by circumstances. Others make excuses for declining, like the men in the parable. Meanwhile, the great Supper is always there in every Catholic church. The Blessed Sacrament is always there. Jesus Christ is always there, all day long for our visits of remembrance and recognition, and every morning for our communions.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

(I Class—Friday after Second Sunday after Pentecost)

Then the Jews (because it was the Parasceve) that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath Day (for that was a great Sabbath Day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

The soldiers therefore came: and they broke the legs of the first and of the other that was crucified with Him.

But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

But one of the soldiers with a spear, opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water.

And he that saw it, hath given testimony: and his testimony is true. (John, XIX, 31-35.)

IT WAS stilled at last, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They did not need to "break His legs" with their sledge-hammer, in order that the sharp pain might suddenly stop Its beating, and thus He might die and be buried before the Friday sunset began their great Sabbath for them. "He was already dead." "They broke the legs of the first and of the other that was crucified with Him. But after they were

come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers"—perhaps in hatred of Him—perhaps for dramatic effect to please the Jews—"opened His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water," not spurting out probably, as from a living fountain, but oozing out quietly as from a Sacred Heart that was dead and still.

It had been beating for thirty-three years and several months. It took Its beat in the very beginning of Its life from the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She was standing at the foot of the cross, now that Its beating was over. It was only over for three days, from Friday afternoon till Sunday morning, and she knew that well, but nevertheless her sorrow was unspeakable. On Sunday It would beat again and beat forever and ever, the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

It is the Heart of love, love for you that you could not describe, that you could not imagine; you will have to wait till heaven gives your liberated soul the new, keen sight of eternity, before you even begin to understand the love of the Sacred Heart.

It was the Heart of sorrow. It read all other hearts and souls from birth to death, as we read an open book, and It saw the sin in them; and the nearness of sin was constant sorrow and constant torture indescribable to that Sacred Heart of Jesus. The woes of all humanity were upon It; the pains and griefs of every human being rankled in It; and the sorrow of that Sacred Heart of our divine Lord increased and accumulated every day for thirty-three long years. Some think that He might have died of sorrow and a broken Heart even if He had not been crucified.

It was the bravest Heart that ever beat in the

bosom of a human body. "The *Lamb* of God (John, I, 29) was at the same time "the *Lion* of the Tribe of Juda." (Apoc., v, 5.) Alone He fought this world and hell and sin and death, a fight to the death, a war of thirty-three years, and conquered them all and triumphed.

Hear St. John the Evangelist describing His Triumph: "The Lion of the Tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed. . . . And I saw: and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing, as it were, slain. . . . And when He had opened the book, the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints: and they sung a new canticle, saying: 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book and to open the seals thereof: because Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God in Thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.' . . . And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them—I heard all saying: 'To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction and honor and glory and power forever and ever!'" (Apoc., v, 5-13.)

O Heart of love and Heart of sorrow, O Lion-Heart of courage unparalleled, "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, we implore that we may ever love Thee more and more."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Now the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him to hear Him.

And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying: "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

And He spoke to them this parable, saying:

"What man of you that hath an hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost, until he find it?

"And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing:

"And coming home, call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost.'

"I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.

"Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it?

"And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost'?

"So, I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance." (Luke, xv, 1-10.)

THE ANGELS and saints in heaven take a deep interest in the human beings on this earth. They constantly rejoice over the men, women and children down here who are keeping in the state of grace; but they feel a thrill of most ecstatic joy when they see some poor sinner, repentant, leaving the state of mortal sin, or the state of original sin, for the state of grace. There is "joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance," "joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."

We might not think that poor sinners down here on this earth were of such consequence, of such importance, up in the glory of heaven. The Pharisees and scribes did not think so. The Pharisees and

scribes would not let sinners come near them, for fear of catching their sin. Of course *they* were not sinners, themselves. *They* were all saints and angels—in their own eyes. And they were greatly shocked when sinners drew near to Our Saviour to listen to Him, and He did not push them away, but allowed them to be as near as they wished, and in some cases actually went into their houses and sat down to eat and drink with them. "This man receiveth sinners," they said, "and eateth with them!"

That exclusive, vainglorious, hypocritical spirit of those scribes and Pharisees has never vanished from the earth during all these nineteen hundred years. It is on the earth still. It almost fills the world at this present time. The saints had none of it. Christ's true disciples have none of it. But in this world they are a small minority. Christ brought the other spirit, the sympathy for humanity, as human, which neither excludes nor makes exception of any human being; the spirit of democracy, so much exulted in and boasted of at the present time, and so hard to find anywhere. And that other spirit is the spirit of His Church, and of its truest members.

Christ's Church is wide open for sinners, it invites sinners, it goes after them. It is just the opposite of exclusive; it is democratic; it is for all. It has its three great branches or divisions: in heaven, in purgatory and on earth: in heaven the Church Triumphant, in purgatory the Church Suffering, and on earth the Church Militant. The Church Triumphant in heaven includes all human beings who are there. The Church Suffering in purgatory comprises all the human beings who are in purgatory. It is made up entirely of sinners. There

is not one saint in purgatory. And the Church Militant on earth invites all human beings on earth without exception to come to its arms, and warmly receives all who accept its invitation. Not only have sinners a right in Christ's Church, but they have an obligation under pain of mortal sin to belong to it, from which sin and its everlasting consequences only invincible ignorance about the Church can excuse them.

The divine, invisible Head of the Church died in His human nature for sinners. The Church on earth welcomes to her bosom sinners. The Church in purgatory is made up entirely of sinners. The Church in heaven rejoices with an exceedingly great joy over even "one sinner that doth penance."

Jesus of sinners!—"Jesus" means Saviour, as you know well. "Jesus" in the Hebrew is "Saviour" in English.—Saviour of sinners, Jesus of sinners, have mercy on us!

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And it came to pass that when the multitudes pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Genesareth.

And saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets.

And going into one of the ships, that was Simon's, He desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting He taught the multitudes out of the ship.

Now when He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."

And Simon, answering, said to Him: "Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing; but at Thy word I will let down the net."

And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke.

And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking.

Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken.

And so were also James and John the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: "Fear not. From henceforth thou shalt catch men."

And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed Him. (Luke, v, 1-11.)

OUR divine Saviour knew well, and had known from all eternity, that the fisherman Simon would be the Rock upon which He would build His Church; His apostle and the Prince of His apostles; the first Visible Head of His Church on earth; the first and the leader of those hundreds of popes who, one after another, would govern His Church to the end of time.

And Our Saviour on that day was standing near the big lake of Genesareth, the Sea of Galilee as it is often called, with crowds of people pressing upon Him in their anxiety to hear His instructions. There were two fishing vessels standing idle near the shore. The fishermen, who had been dragging their nets all night without taking anything, rather discouraged had left the boats and were washing their nets on the shore. Our divine Lord stepped up into one of them, beckoned its owner and bade him "draw back a little from the land"; and sitting there in that floating pulpit, He preached to the people.

The owner of the ship, as Our Lord of course knew well, was the fisherman Simon.

Afterward, partly perhaps to pay him for the use of his vessel and reward him for his readiness in obeying orders, He told him to launch out into the deep waters and let down his nets, with the result which you have just now heard the gospel describing, the miraculous draught of fishes, so wonderful and so different from anything those fishermen had ever seen, that Simon Peter in fear and trembling fell down at Our Saviour's knees and cried out to Him: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" But Our Saviour comforted him and bade him not to be afraid, and told him that thenceforth he would be fishing, not in the lake, but in the world, and netting, not fish, but human souls for God and heaven: "And Jesus saith to Simon: 'Fear not. From henceforth thou shalt catch men.' And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed Him."

From the bark of Peter Our Lord spoke the word of God to the multitudes on that day. From the Bark of Peter for nineteen hundred years now He has been distributing to the multitudes His doctrines, graces and sacraments. Often the Church is poetically called the Bark of Peter, and often painted and pictured under that figure. A stormy ocean, stretching out all around it, represents this world covered with its human beings. Some are swimming easily and comfortably, some are struggling for their lives with the waves, some are sinking, some are being drawn up by strong and kind arms to safety on the decks of Peter's ship. The storm rages, the fierce winds are lashing the sea, the waves foam up mountain-high; but the Bark of Peter, majestically and triumphantly

carrying its precious freight of human souls to safety and eternal joy, sails calmly on. It is the only ship that dreads not that raging sea. It is the only one that steers its own course for any great length of time, for any considerable number of centuries, amid the fluctuations and the constantly varying fads and fashions of this stormy world. It is absolutely fearless. It has not the slightest dread of the world. It fears neither the world's foolishness nor the world's wickedness. For it knows from Christ's own solemn promises that nothing can wreck it nor stop it on its course. And so, through wind and wave, smiling at the worst efforts of devils and men, the Bark of Peter sails calmly on, with the Fisherman at its helm—or the Successor of the Fisherman—to whom Jesus said that day on the lake: "Fear not. From henceforth thou shalt catch men."

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

For I tell you that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

You have heard that it was said to them of old: "Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment."

But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother "Raca," shall be in danger of the Council. And whosoever shall say "Thou Fool!" shall be in danger of hell-fire.

If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee,

Leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then, coming, thou shalt offer thy gift. (Matt., v, 20-24.)

IN THE time of our divine Lord this earth was a much wilder and more dangerous place than it now is. Human life now is vastly safer and more secure than it was then. Blows and wounds and murders were immensely more frequent. It has taken many centuries of Christianity to give us our present civilization.

The word "fool," which is quite a harmless word according to our present use of it, was a reckless word to speak to anybody in those times. You had to be careful what you said, if you wanted to live long. To say to any one "Raca," was inviting a blow or a wound; to say "Thou fool" was courting death. It was a different world from the world which Christ and His Church have made it.

Now our divine Lord desired to emphasize the great truth that sin is interior, a truth which the scribes and Pharisees lost sight of. The sin is not so much in the outward action, as in the interior heart and soul from which that action springs. The very same action, murder or whatever else it might be, which is a sin for free and conscious human beings, is no sin for brute animals, because they have no rational soul, nor for insane people or infants, because their brain and nerves are so diseased or so immature that their souls cannot use them. It is not the hand nor the feet that sin, but the soul, the heart, the will, which directs the hands and feet. And therefore there can be sin, and mortal sin even, without any outward action whatever.

This truth, so well known and familiar to us Christians, was not nearly so clear to the Jews of nineteen hundred years ago, nor to the scribes and Pharisees who taught them, blind leaders of the blind. And so Our Saviour warned His hearers on that day that, unless their justice and righteousness

abounded more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, they would never enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is not only wilful murder which is mortal sin, but also such anger as might prompt murder, always supposing of course "sufficient reflection and full consent of the will," without which there can be no mortal sin of any kind. And not only your enemy's (or your friend's) deliberate action is mortal sin for him, but also your deliberate words (spoken with "sufficient reflection and full consent of the will") are mortal sin for you, if you foresee, or could prudently foresee, that they will cause him to commit that action. "Whosoever shall say to his brother 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the Council. And whosoever shall say 'Thou fool!' shall be in danger of hell-fire."

Such progress as we have made and such civilization as we have, we must thank Christ for. If a large majority instead of the minority of human beings believed His doctrines and obeyed His precepts, our civilization would be vastly better than it is. However, such as it is, let us thank Christ and His Church for it.

After all, earth's civilization is of small consequence compared with *the lasting things*, which only come to us after we have left earth, with our dead bodies upon it. A few minutes, or a few years (they are practically the same compared with eternity)—that is what earth's civilization amounts to, so far as it directly concerns either you or me. But such as it is, let us thank Our Saviour for it. And let us do our part to protect and preserve, and even increase it, according to our small ability, by living, not merely the civilized life, but the Christian, Catholic life.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

In those days again when there was a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, calling His disciples together, He saith to them:

"I have compassion on the multitude, for behold, they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat.

"And if I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way, for some of them come from afar off."

And His disciples answered Him: "From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness?"

And He asked them: "How many loaves have ye?" Who said: "Seven."

And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, He broke, and gave to His disciples for to set before them; and they set them before the people.

And they had a few little fishes; and He blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them.

And they did eat and were filled; and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets.

And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and He sent them away. (Mark, VIII, 1-9.)

OUR divine Lord had compassion on the multitude, for they had nothing to eat. Their food-baskets were empty, for they had been following Him for three days now, and the food they had taken with them was all consumed. Some of them had come from a distance and might faint and fall more than once before they reached home, if they had to make the journey weak and hungry as they were. It was a time and a country of beautiful hospitality, where any home would offer food to any stranger who came to the door; but they were far out in the wilderness, with no homes near them, nor any place to buy food either. And, besides, they were such a large multitude, about four thousand

people, that it would require a whole city of hospitable homes to properly feed them. So the Sacred Heart of Jesus took pity upon them, and worked this beautiful miracle which the Gospel tells of.

We are accustomed to the cutting of bread. It is either served to us already sliced, or is cut for us at the table with a bread-knife. There was no such custom in that country at Our Saviour's time. The breaking of bread was universal. Whoever sat at the head of the table took the loaf, broke it into a number of pieces with his hands, and passed these pieces about to the others. So our divine Saviour on that day took the seven loaves one after another and the fishes. He "gave thanks," blessing them and their food, as we still do before we sit down to table, following His example. He broke the loaves with His sacred hands and gave the portions to His disciples, who brought them to the people seated on the grass, probably using the empty food-baskets, of which there were a great many in the crowd, in order to serve the vast multitude more quickly.

So the disciples went to and fro, perhaps for an hour or more, from our divine Lord to the hungry multitude on whom He had compassion, and back to Our Lord, until every one had eaten enough. And then they gathered up the fragments, filling seven baskets with these; that none of the kind gifts of a most merciful, all-powerful God might be despised or wilfully wasted. And all that time, for an hour or more, this most merciful, all-powerful God stood there—He Who has compassion on the multitude—patiently breaking with those two blessed hands of His human nature the loaves which He was multiplying or creating out of nothing by the infinite power of His divine nature.

"Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man! Blessed be the name of Jesus! Blessed be His most sacred Heart! Blessed be Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar!" For this wonderful multiplication of the loaves was only a weak, faint figure of that infinitely glorious Sacrament of the Altar, where He Himself Who has compassion on the multitude, is always present under the appearances of bread, in millions of churches, and between the fingers of millions of priests, and on the tongues and in the bosoms of millions of people, to be the multitude's daily food.

May He Who that day had pity on their bodily hunger, take pity now on our spiritual weakness; and feed and strengthen us, as He fed and strengthened them, for our long journey homeward to our eternal home in the Bosom of His love!

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns? or figs of thistles?

Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire.

Wherefore, by their fruits you shall know them.

Not every one that saith to Me "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father Who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matt., VII, 15-21.)

PRAYING without obeying, will not save anybody. Saying "Lord, Lord" to Him without trying to do His holy will, will never bring us into His kingdom of heaven. If we desire to save our souls, we must both pray and obey.

"Is prayer necessary to salvation?" the Catechism asks; and it answers: "Prayer is necessary to salvation, and without it no one having the use of reason can be saved." It does not have to ask: "Is obedience necessary to salvation?" because common sense tells us that. Everybody knows that there is not the slightest hope of salvation unless we obey God, to some extent at least, before we die.

Faith, hope and charity, or love, are all parts of our obedience to God. They are all commanded us by God. Love is the first and the greatest of all God's commandments. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and His human creatures for God's sake. Love is the obedience of the heart. Hope is obedience of our souls to the invitations and the enticements of God's infinite goodness and promises. Faith is an humble obedience and submissive assent of the mind and intellect to God's teachings, even when they are mysteries, which we cannot clearly see nor fully understand. It is obedience and assent of the mind to all that God the Holy Ghost has ever interpreted through the Roman Catholic Church; to all that the Church's divine Founder, God in the flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord, revealed here on this earth before His Ascension; and to all that God revealed centuries before that, through the Patriarchs and true prophets.

"Beware of false prophets," Our Saviour said. All teachers of religion, in one broad sense of the word, are prophets: not only those who themselves foresaw the future, inspired by God the Holy Ghost or

informed by evil spirits, and foretold what they foresaw; but also the ordinary preachers and teachers of religion who, without foreseeing anything themselves, foretell to you, for example, just where you will be one hundred years from now if you die in mortal sin, and other sure future events, which Christ and His Church have taught and teach. The word "prophet" is used frequently in both the Old and New Testaments for both these kinds of teachers of religion.

And Our Saviour knew, as no one else, the multitudes of false teachers of religion, by word and counsel and example, who would crowd this world through all the centuries of the Church and in all times. And He solemnly warned us: "Beware of false prophets."

He had just said: "Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and strait the way that leadeth to life! And few there are that find it." (Matt., VII, 13, 14.) And immediately and without any break or interruption whatever, He added on: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," and the rest of to-day's gospel: "By their fruits you shall know them"—"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire"—"Not every one that saith to Me 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the Will of My Father Who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Praying without obeying, will avail us nothing at the moment of death. Then at least, if not before, we must not only pray but also obey, with mind and

intellect, with heart and soul, at least to the extent of being free from mortal sin; otherwise we should be fruitless trees, to be cut down and cast into the fire.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And he said also to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward; and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods.

"And he called him, and said to him: 'How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship. For now thou canst be steward no longer.'

"And the steward said within himself: 'What shall I do? Because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship. To dig I am not able. To beg I am ashamed.

" 'I know what I will do; that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

"Therefore, calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: 'How much dost thou owe my lord?'

"But he said: 'A hundred barrels of oil.' And he said to him: 'Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write "Fifty."'

"Then he said to another: 'And how much dost thou owe?' Who said: 'A hundred quarters of wheat.' He said to him: 'Take thy bill, and write "Eighty."'

"And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely. For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.

"And I say to you: 'Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity; that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.'" (Luke, XVI, 1-9.)

IT WAS not our divine Lord Who commended and praised the low cunning of that unjust steward, but it was his own lord, the rich man over

whose estates he had been agent. It was our divine Lord, however, Who remarked, after finishing His parable: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

How is it that so often we are wiser and more thorough as children of this world in affairs of this little fleeting world, than as children of light in the everlasting business of eternity? Twelve hours a day, or more, we give to this world's business, eight hours or so to sleep; and a few minutes to our night and morning prayers. Even on Sundays one hour is devoted to Holy Mass, maybe a couple of hours to the Mass and evening services; and all the other hours to things of this world.

The other world's business is certainly more important. It is so immensely more important, that any thoughtful, serious comparison you might draw between the two, would make this world's business look trivial and ridiculous. Why, in seventy years or so it's all over—as completely gone and past as a game of checkers or a game of cards—and nothing from it, no results, no winnings nor earnings—not one cent in your empty, dead hands from all your labors—excepting in so far as with God's help you made this world's business and activities bear upon the everlasting business of the other world.

You make this world's business and activities bear upon those of the world to come and bring forth lasting fruit for you, when you consecrate them to God and keep offering them to God. Your morning Mass and holy communion sanctify your whole day's work. Even your morning prayer does this to a great extent, especially where you have not time for Mass or holy communion. At your night prayers, again you lay it all before God and

offer it to Him. Everything you have, is His anyway, whether you give it to Him or not—your talents, your strength, your skill, your labors, property, body, mind and soul are His goods, over which you are His agent or steward; and if you keep using them for Him, then you are not wasting your Master's goods, still less are you cheating Him out of any portion of them.

The time draws near when He must say to us: "Give an account of thy stewardship." Each in his turn reaches the shore of the great Rubicon, the river of Death, to cross over it into eternity; and after death the judgment, where Christ Our Saviour Who bled and died for us, is Christ our Judge Who shall reward or punish us.

May we be in the state of grace at the very least, when death places us before His judgment-seat. May we be able to tell Him that with all our faults we love Him. And may we find Him an infinitely merciful Judge.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying:

"If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes.

"For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side.

"And beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."

And entering into the Temple, He began to cast out them that sold therein and them that bought,

Saying to them: "It is written: 'My house is the house of prayer.' But you have made it a den of thieves."

And He was teaching daily in the Temple. (Luke, XIX, 41-47.)

PATRIOTISM not only is a natural virtue, but may be a supernatural virtue too. It may be one of the forms or species of supernatural charity or love of neighbor. That is what it was in the saints; and certainly that is what it was in our divine Saviour. He loved His native land and Jerusalem, its capital city, with an ardent love. And as He came in sight of Jerusalem that day, knowing that about forty years later on a Roman army would level it to the ground, He "wept over it," lamenting its sad fate.

"If thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace!" Our Saviour said to it. Jerusalem had not known the things that were for its own good, nor had the nation. It had never known, not for any great length of time. The history of that nation, as you may read it in the Old Testament, is utterly different from any other history. Chosen by God out of the whole world, loved by Him with a special love, treated with marvelous kindness, favored as no other nation has been—its rulers, with a large majority of its people, had been grossly unfaithful to God for by far the larger part of the centuries before Christ. It had never known "the things that were for its peace." They were hidden from its eyes.

And now its day had come. Its Christ, so long expected and promised, was in its midst. Even yet it was not too late; but very soon it would be. How would the nation decide—its rulers, its chief priests and scribes and Pharisees, with the majority of its

people—how would it decide, about Christ? Would it accept Him or reject Him? "If thou hadst known, and in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace!"

It rejected Him, with the most bitter hatred and the most bitter scorn—scorn and hatred which the world cannot understand even now—which even non-Christian readers of this present day find unintelligible and mysterious. Christians understand it better, because they know what a large part the invisible demons played in the momentous events of those days.

Forty years afterward Christ's prophecy was fulfilled. Jerusalem was leveled to the ground. Its people were scattered through the world. So they have stayed for nineteen hundred years. So they still are, notwithstanding the promises made to them by some of the victors, in the panic of the late big war. Millions of money already have been spent to further the fulfillment of those schemes, but fruitlessly. Where Jerusalem used to be, or nearly on its location, the pagan Romans built the town of Aelia. It has been called Jerusalem for many hundreds of years now. At the present time it is a city of Arabs, Mohammedan in religion, with possibly one Jew in every ten of its population. The nation that rejected Christ is still an exiled nation, its descendants scattered all over the world. Nearly four million are in the United States, ten million in other countries, and about one hundred thousand in what used to be their own country, Palestine.

How different it might have been, for them and for the world, if they had accepted Christ instead of rejecting Him. Perhaps St. Peter and all the

other Popes, his successors, living and dying in Jerusalem rather than Rome;—perhaps Christ's Church the Judaic Catholic Church instead of the Roman Catholic;—perhaps the world, not many nations as now, but one great democracy peaceful and harmonious, with its center at Jerusalem;—if they had known "the things that were for their peace."

But they were hidden from their eyes. Their eyes were wide open to material things, but mysteriously blinded to the spiritual. This world they clearly appreciated; the lasting they forgot. Pontius Pilate and King Herod and every other little dignitary and nabob of the time they flattered and adulated; Jesus Christ they crucified. Noble things they gave no place to; trade and money and business they set up and enthroned even in the Temple itself.

"And entering into the Temple, He began to cast out them that sold therein and them that bought, saying to them: 'It is written: "My house is the house of prayer." But you have made it a den of thieves.'"

May we be warned, as individuals and as nations, by the sad history of Judæa and Jerusalem. May we know in this our day the things that for our peace!

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And to some who trusted in themselves as just and despised others, He spoke also this parable:

"Two men went up into the Temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

"The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: 'O

God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men: extortioners, unjust, adulterers: as also is this publican.

"'I fast twice in a week. I give tithes of all that I possess.'

"And the publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes toward heaven; but struck his breast, saying: 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'

"I say to you, this man went down into his house justified, rather than the other; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke, XVIII, 9-14.)

OUR divine Saviour spoke this parable to people who considered themselves just and righteous, despising other people, and who trusted in themselves as just, instead of trusting in God to make them just and keep them just. A just man, as they used the word, was a man who kept, not the seventh commandment in particular, but all the commandments, and the lesser precepts of the Mosaic Law also. And they thought themselves just, even in this wide sense of the word, thought themselves clean from all sin; and "trusted in themselves as just," putting their foolish trust and confidence in their own fancied justice and righteousness; and they despised the rest of the world.

The Pharisee in the parable was a good type or specimen of this kind of people. He went into the Temple to pray. And he began, and probably ended, his prayer by thanking God for his own extraordinary excellence, for having made him so spotless and perfect, so different from all the others. He thanked God that he was not like the rest, and especially not like that publican who had come into the Temple at the same time with him.

The publicans as a class had a very bad reputation. They were the tax-collectors for the Roman

empire, one province of which was Judæa. Taxes were not clearly determined each year by the government, as they are with us; but each collector or publican fixed the tax for those in his own district, according to his own notions, taking his salary, or the most important part of it, from the proceeds, and making all he could out of the job. So the publicans were notorious among the Jews. They were oppressors, extortioners, extremely dishonest, and in many cases vicious also in other ways.

Therefore the Pharisee prayed: "O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men: extortioners, unjust, adulterers: as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week. I give tithes of all that I possess."

And the publican, who might have been an exception, better than the rest of his class, or if he had been like other publicans, might have repented now and resolved to change his ways, struck his breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

And in concluding His parable Our Saviour told them that the publican went down from the Temple to his home justified or forgiven for his sins, rather than the Pharisee.

Because praising yourself, exalting yourself—is not the way to please God and propitiate Him—but the very opposite course: humbling yourself before Him; trying to realize who you are and Who He is, what you are and What He is; forcing yourself to "know your place," even though it takes years of effort and self-training; having the truthfulness and the common sense to see and acknowledge your shortcomings and your insignificant smallness in body and soul, not only as compared with God Himself, but even as compared with His Creation—that

is the way to please God, at all times, and most of all at times of prayer.

"Because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." He has promised it, Who always keeps His word. "Humility is truth," both St. Augustine and St. Bernard said; humility is sane and healthy common sense. Pride is falsehood and lies and self-deceit, silly and distorted insanity. Be patient, and you will see, at the General Judgment if not before, every one that exalteth himself, humbled, and every one that humbleth himself, exalted. Sooner or later, either in time or in eternity or in both, pride will be dashed to the ground; and humility will be raised up higher than the highest stars, to the happiness and glory of God.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And again going out of the coasts of Tyre, He came by Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

And they bring to Him one deaf and dumb; and they besought Him that He would lay His hand upon him.

And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears and, spitting, He touched his tongue;

And looking up to heaven, He groaned, and said to him: "Ephpheta," which is, "Be thou opened."

And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.

And He charged them that they should tell no man. But the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it.

And so much the more did they wonder, saying: "He hath done all things well; He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." (Mark, VII, 31-37.)

THEY asked our divine Saviour to lay His hand on the man who was deaf and dumb; but instead of simply doing that, He went through quite a little ceremony in granting him his cure. He took him a few steps away from the others; He put two of His sacred fingers into his ears; He spat a little, perhaps on a clean stone or something similar, and moistening His fingers, touched the man's tongue with them; He looked up to heaven and groaned and said "Ephpheta," that is, "Be thou opened." All this ceremony Our Lord went through with, in granting the man his hearing and his speech. He wanted him to see and understand clearly what was being done for him, and instead of explaining by words, He explained by ceremonies; for the man was very deaf, but he was not blind. He desired to arouse his faith and his trust and confidence in the fact that he was being cured. And He desired to set a public example of the use of ceremonies for His Church, His bishops and priests and people. He desired to put His divine approval to the end of time on ceremonies.

Sometimes outsiders have criticised the Catholic Church for its use of ceremonies. In to-day's gospel we see that the Church is doing in this matter what its Master did—that in this, as in everything else, she is imitating her divine Founder. Ceremonies, like words or language, are the outward signs and expression of inward thoughts and feelings. They would not criticise anybody for talking, for using language. Bowing to a friend is a ceremony. Shaking hands is a ceremony; the hands, joined for a moment, signify the inward souls and hearts joined in mutual affection and sympathy. If ceremonies are used outside of the Church, certainly they may be used within it. In religion, as in other things, the

little body—its hands, its knees, as well as its tongue—should do its little part together with the great soul that dwells in it. Signing yourself with the sign of the cross, is a ceremony. Bending your knee, bowing your head, kneeling—these are ceremonies. Every action, movement, gesture of the priest at Mass, the vestments he wears, the lights on the altar, the incense and countless other things, processions, benedictions, ritual of the sacraments —all are ceremonies. Every one of them speaks with its little voice more eloquently than words. Every one of them outwardly expresses inward feelings, thoughts and sentiments. Every one of them joins exultantly in the grand, harmonious chorus of the public adoration which man is sending up to God. And there is nothing so sublimely beautiful on this earth—either in palace or parliament-house or theater or outdoors, pomp or pageant —as the glorious ceremonial of the Roman Catholic Church.

Certainly the Church does all things well. Her human instruments, her sheep and even her shepherds, may have their faults. But the Church herself, in whom God the Holy Ghost constantly dwells, imitating her divine Founder, God the Son, does all things well, as they said about Him on that day when He cured the man who was deaf and dumb: "And he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: 'He hath done all things well; He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.' "

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And turning to His disciples, He said: "Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see.

"For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them."

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, tempting Him and saying: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?"

But He said to him: "What is written in the Law? How readest thou?"

He answering said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

And He said to him: "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: "And who is my neighbor?"

And Jesus, answering, said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead.

"And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way and, seeing him, passed by.

"In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by.

"But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near and, seeing him, was moved with compassion,

"And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

"And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: 'Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee.'

"Which of these three in thy opinion was 'neighbor' to him that fell among the robbers?"

But he said: "He that showed mercy to him." And Jesus said to him: "Go, and do thou in like manner." (Luke, x, 23-37.)

IT IS most true that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that we see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that we hear, and have not heard them. For more than four thousand years God's chosen people in all the tribes and nations, but most particularly the Israelites, who were as a nation and in a very special manner His Chosen People, had been looking forward with ardent desire to the coming of the Christ. For more than four thousand years He had been promised and expected; and in that long period of time there would be very many prophets and kings burning with desire for His coming, with ardent longing to see Him and hear Him. "Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see," Our Saviour said to His disciples, and would say to us; for we see His Church, His sacraments, even the appearances of bread under which He is, and behold so many things which those prophets and kings desired to see, but lived and died without seeing.

We see our partly civilized world, so very different from their savage and barbarous world, beginning to be controlled a little by His great law of love. We see the heaven wide-opened for us now by His passion and death, where angels and saints live the eternal life which is *the real life*. "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" the lawyer asked Him; and Our Saviour answered his question by another question: "What is written in the Law, how readest thou?" The lawyer knew his law, and promptly replied: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul

and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." "Thou hast answered right," Our Saviour said to him; "this do, and thou shalt live."

Was he not living already? Yes, with a sort of life, as we are now, if you like to call it life; with this wretched earth-life, this pitiable, uncertain, weak beginning of life that we have on this earth; but not with the eternal life which he had asked about, not with the intense, overflowing, sure life of heaven. "This do, and thou shalt *live*," Our Saviour said to him. But the lawyer was not yet quite satisfied, and once more he questioned our divine Lord: "And who is my neighbor?"—Who is my neighbor whom I must love if I want to *live?* My own family? My own relations and friends? Just those who dwell near me? Those of my own religion? Those of my own nation?—No, more; immensely more. Every human being without exception: enemy as well as friend, foreigner as well as fellow-countryman, pagan and infidel as well as true believer, stranger as well as acquaintance: every human being without exception, is my neighbor.

Our divine Lord told the lawyer the parable of universal brotherhood, the parable of the Good Samaritan. Samaria and Judæa, bordering on each other, were hostile countries. Constantly for centuries now, there had been either warfare or hatred between them. Samaria practiced a groveling, more than half pagan, religion; Judæa worshiped the true God. A Jew, even in Our Saviour's time, would not eat at the same table with a Samaritan. And when Our Lord had told the lawyer about the poor wounded Jew, passed by without pity by a priest and by a Levite of his own nation and

religion, and then rescued, nursed and cherished by a Samaritan, He gently asked him: " 'Which of these three in thy opinion was "neighbor" to him that fell among the robbers?' But he said: 'He that showed mercy to him.' And Jesus said to him: 'Go, and do thou in like manner.' "

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And it came to pass, as He was going to Jerusalem, He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

And as He entered into a certain town, there met Him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off,

And lifted up their voice, saying: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

Whom when He saw, He said: "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean.

And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God.

And he fell on his face before His feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan.

And Jesus, answering, said: "Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine?

"There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger."

And He said to him: "Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole." (Luke, XVII, 11-19.)

OUR divine Saviour felt ingratitude as we do, or rather, much more keenly than we do. All His feelings during His mortal life were immensely more keen and intense than ours. He is, at one and the same time in His one undivided and indivisible Person, infinite God and perfect Man, perfect Man in body and soul; and joys and delights, as

well as pains and sorrows, were sharper and richer with Him than ever with us. He felt ingratitude bitterly, as to-day's gospel shows. He looked around sadly and said: "Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine?" The Samaritan, the "stranger," came back to thank Him and give glory to Him; but with the nine Jews, when they had obtained what they begged from Him, out of sight He was out of mind.

Ingratitude is not only un-Christian; it is inhuman. God has planted gratitude in us as a natural virtue; so that, even without the assistance of supernatural grace, we thank people from morning to night. It is as easy as breathing. Even the animals seem to feel gratitude. A dog will wag his tail and, so far as a dog's face can smile, will smile his thanks to you even for a little pat on the head. Like every other natural virtue, it becomes supernatural in Christians. The higher motives of Christian life, the supernatural motives, and, above all, the supernatural grace of God, beautify your gratitude, glorify it, supernaturalize it, make it a much more exquisite virtue in Christians than in ordinary human beings.

But so much the worse for those who do not possess it or do not practice it in some form. The ingrate is not only un-Christian; he is inhuman. He is breaking not only the laws of God, but also the laws of nature. He is not normal, a sort of freak or monster. And so the Sacred Heart of Jesus felt very keenly the ingratitude of those lepers whom He had cleansed from their incurable disease, and He gently rebuked them: "Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger."

Ingratitude from your own, cuts you more cruelly than ingratitude from strangers. It is like a thunder-clap out of a clear sky. It is so unexpected, so savage, so sudden. The ingratitude which the Sacred Heart of Jesus met with during His mortal life and meets with even yet, came nearly all, from His own—not from His ownest own, not from His blessed Mother, never, thank God, never even once from her—but from the rest of us. He does not feel it now, at least, not with pain or sorrow. Sorrow and pain were over forever for Him when He bowed His head upon the cross and, "crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." (Matt., XXVII, 50.) But He is offended by it and displeased by it as much as ever, because amidst all the joys and glories of His heaven the Lamb of God loves us with the same old love.

It must be awful to suffer for your own as He suffered, and die for your own as He died, and then see them turn upon you and pierce you with their shafts of ingratitude. If they were strangers, it would not be quite so bad.

Are we ingrates? Yes, every one of us, insofar as every one of us is a sinner. Are we freaks and monsters? Yes; maybe not toward one another, but certainly toward Him. God forgive us, and pity us; and gradually bring us back to sentiments and dispositions of ordinary, everyday gratitude!

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say to you: Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat? and the body more than the raiment?

Behold the birds of the air. For they neither sow nor do they reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?

And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?

And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin:

But I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.

And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe, how much more you, O ye of little faith!

Be not solicitous therefore, saying: "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "Wherewith shall we be clothed?"

For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.

Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God, and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matt., VI, 24-33.)

NINETEEN hundred years ago slavery was extremely common in all the nations. Through the doctrines and precepts of Christ, and directly or indirectly through His Church, it has gradually been abolished. To serve in His day was to be a slave, and nearly every servant was a slave at that time.

Mammon means, not only money, but other kinds of property: farms, factories, real estate, stocks, bonds, as well as money itself. All kinds of earthly wealth are included in the idea of mammon.

Our Saviour warns us in this gospel that we cannot be the *slaves* of money or of earthly wealth and the servants of God at one and the same time: "You cannot *serve* God and mammon." With Christian motives and with proper precautions, you can be the masters of money, the earners, the owners, the savers of money; but in so far as you allow yourself to be the *slave* of money, in so far you cease being the servant of God.

It is little by little that people draw away from God's service; not so often by one sudden leap or bound, as by gradual steps, approaching nearer and nearer to the abyss, which they finally plunge into. Scarcely any unfortunate man, woman or child commits his first mortal sin of any particular kind without having previously prepared himself for that hideous calamity by many venial sins, and even deliberate venial sins, along the same lines. So Our Saviour warns us against the love of money, which leads people and tempts people into every kind of mortal sin that you could mention. "For the desire of money is the root of all evils." (I Tim., VI, 10.) And He also warns us against solicitude, over-anxiety and too much concern about the things of this earth.

You have no religion in you worthy of the name unless you are constantly trying to keep God in the top place in your mind and heart, and earthly affairs and everything else down below God. "O my God, I love Thee above all things"—you know the Act of Love. Above all things, God; and if He is above all things in your mind and heart, you will be anxious but not over-anxious, you will be concerned but not too much concerned, even about food and drink and clothing; and certainly not over-anxious nor too much concerned about other earthly

things which are not so immediately necessary to you.

Some concern, some anxiety, is a duty. If you have a family or dependents, it is your duty to provide for them; and not merely to-day's food and clothing, but to-morrow's and the future's so far as you can; until they are able to provide for themselves. If you had no family, and were determined never to marry, even then it would be your duty to provide for yourself. You are not allowed to be a burden to others if you can help it, nor to throw yourself upon charity. If God throws you on charity, thank God for the promotion; it is a promotion, because those whose poverty is the most extreme on this earth, if they are keeping in the state of grace, are generally the highest on this earth in the eyes of God and His angels. But you are not allowed to throw yourself upon charity, and therefore you must have some concern and some anxiety about money and the things it represents.

It is over-anxiety and too much concern that Our Saviour warns us against in the Gospel of to-day. Do not *serve* or be a slave to mammon—to what the Holy Bible calls "filthy lucre" (Tit., I, 7) and other names even less polite than that. Do not have any large ideas about stuff that can only last you for a few years at longest. Do not admire money, either in itself or in its owners, nor even respect it, still less love or adore it. Keep the highest place in your heart constantly for God, the first place in your mind for His religion, His Church, His heaven —the things that *last*. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you."

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And it came to pass afterward that He went into a city that is called Naim; and there went with Him His disciples and a great multitude.

And when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow; and a great multitude of the city was with her.

Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy toward her, He said to her: "Weep not."

And He came near, and touched the bier. And they that carried it, stood still. And He said: "Young man, I say to thee, arise."

And he that was dead, sat up and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother.

And there came a fear on them all. And they glorified God, saying: "A great prophet is risen up among us; and God hath visited His people." (Luke, VII, 11-16.)

WE DO not know how many times our divine Lord raised the dead to life. Only three cases are recorded in the Gospels. First, there was Lazarus, whose dead body had been in the sepulcher four days; Our Lord had them remove the stone from the door or opening of the tomb, and commanded: "Lazarus, come forth!" and Lazarus walked out, very slowly, because his feet and hands were bound with the winding-bands; the napkin was tied around his face, and the sheets about his body just as he had been buried, without any coffin, according to their manner of burying; and Our Saviour bade them loosen him and set him free. A second case was that of the daughter of Jairus, a little girl twelve years old. And a third, the case described in to-day's gospel.

These three are the only ones recorded in the

four Gospels, but it is probable that He raised the dead to life many other times also. Because the four Evangelists give us, not all His miracles, but only a selection from them. In closing his Gospel St. John writes: "There are also many other things which Jesus did: which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." (John, XXI. 25.) And St. John was with Him nearly all the time during those marvelous three years, and of course knew from his own eyes and ears what he was writing about.

What a wonderful experience it must have been, to behold the miracles of Christ! That resurrection of to-day's gospel, for example, which an immense crowd of people beheld! Not only His disciples, but also "a great multitude" besides, were with our divine Lord as He drew near to the city of Naim that day. Another "great multitude," coming out from the city with the funeral procession, met them. No horses nor hearses, of course, at their funerals, but the dead body without a coffin, wrapped in sheets and carried all the way on an open bier by the pall-bearers. And at this funeral, walking behind the bier, the chief mourner, a woman, weeping and lamenting, a widow, deprived long before of her husband, and now of her only son.

Our divine Lord would think of His own blessed Mother, a widow also—for St. Joseph had died before Christ began His public life—and about to be deprived of her only Son on Mount Calvary shortly afterward. He would certainly think of His Almighty Father of Whom He was always thinking, Who for love of us would soon deliver Him, His only Son, His only-begotten Son, to the shameful death of the cross.

Losing or giving up one's only son—has a special appeal to God. For God has done that Himself, in His infinite love for us. As He said so long before to Abraham, an ancestor of Christ's Mother, when Abraham had been resigned and ready to sacrifice Isaac at His command: "By My own self have I sworn, saith the Lord: because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared *thy* only-begotten son for My sake: I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is by the seashore: thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen., XXII, 16-18.)

"Moved with mercy toward her," our divine Lord glanced at the face of that sorrowful mother. "Weep not," He said to her, and He came a few steps nearer. When He touched the bier, the pall-bearers stood still with it. "And He said: 'Young man, I say to thee, arise.' And he that was dead, sat up and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all."

No wonder! They were in the immediate presence of the Lord of Life and Death. And with Him, we *must* fear, as well as love.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And it came to pass when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath Day to eat bread, that they watched Him.

And, behold, there was a certain man before Him that had the dropsy.

And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day?"

But they held their peace. But He, taking him, healed him and sent him away.

And answering them, He said: "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit; and will not immediately draw him out, on the Sabbath Day?"

And they could not answer Him these things.

And He spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them:

"When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him;

"And he that invited thee and him, come and say to thee: 'Give this man place': and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place.

"But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: 'Friend, go up higher.' Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee.

"Because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." (Luke, XIV, 1-11.)

IN THE house of this very influential man on that Sabbath Day there were many Pharisees and many scribes or lawyers expert in the Law of Moses. And Our Saviour put the question to them: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day?" And they were afraid to answer: "Yes."

It was a great feast, to which many had been invited, and our divine Lord was among them. Just in front of Him was a certain man who had the dropsy; and Our Lord, moved with pity at the sad condition of this poor man, and also desiring to teach them by deed and example that it *is* lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day, "healed him and sent him away." Then He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for their pharisaic notions about the

Sabbath. Why, if a beast of burden belonging to them, an ox or an ass, should fall into a pit on the Sabbath Day, they would have no scruple about drawing him out of his danger; but if any one relieved the misery and sickness of a human being, that, they considered, was breaking the Sabbath.

This was one of the very things of which they accused Our Saviour on another occasion, when He gave sight on the Sabbath Day to a man who was born blind. "Some, therefore, of the Pharisees said: 'This man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath.'" (John, IX, 16.) *They* were blinded with their pride and made stupid by it. As individuals and as a class they talked and acted, and no doubt felt, as if *they* were the Law of Moses, or even Moses himself walking this earth again.

At that very feast which to-day's gospel tells of, Our Lord reproved them for their pride and the bad manners it betrayed them into. Each one, as he came in, occupied the highest and most honorable place he could find at the table. And if the master of the house made a place for some one whom he had special reasons for honoring, then the Pharisee, dispossessed of his seat, would have to go down to the very bottom of the table to find another, because none of the other Pharisees would move down one inch or yield the least bit of *his* glory and honor, to make room for him.

Even we with all our faults would be pained, more than we would be amused, by that spectacle of silly pride. And how pained He must have been, the perfect Man, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose Heart is "meek and humble"! These same people, whose pride displayed itself so publicly and notoriously even on the Sabbath Day, and who claimed to be free from all sin themselves and thanked God

that they were not like other men in that respect, called Him "a sinner" and said that He was "not of God" because He healed sickness and gave sight to the blind on the Sabbath Day.

Seeking His lost sheep, striving to save them from their pride and from their sins, He said to them: "Sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: 'Friend, go up higher.' Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." That prophecy and promise that He made to the Pharisees, is as true for us as it was for them. Sometimes even in this life, and if not in this life, then always in the everlasting life that follows it, that prophecy is fulfilled: "Every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And one of them, a doctor of the law, asked Him, tempting Him:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

Jesus said to him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind.

"This is the greatest and the first commandment.

"And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

"On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets."

And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them,

Saying: "What think you of Christ? Whose son is he?" They say to Him: "David's."

He saith to them: "How, then, doth David in spirit call him 'Lord,' saying:

"'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool"'?

"If David then call him 'Lord,' how is he his son?"

And no man was able to answer Him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions. (Matt., XXII, 35-46.)

OUR divine Saviour asked the Pharisees: "What think you of Christ? Whose son is he?" Of course the Pharisees did not admit that Jesus was Christ; and they "had agreed among themselves that, if any man should confess Him to be Christ" (John, IX, 22), they would excommunicate that man and put him out of the synagogue; but they believed firmly that very soon now the Christ, or the Messias as they also called Him, would come. In fact, the time for His coming, according to Daniel the Prophet, had already arrived. It was also perfectly clear from the Prophets that this Christ or Messias must be the son or descendant of David. So on that day, when Our Saviour questioned them about this Christ: "What think you of Christ? Whose son is he?" they answered without any hesitation "David's." Then our divine Saviour said to them: "If he is David's son, how can David call him 'Lord'?"

In the 109th Psalm, our familiar "Dixit Dominus," which was as familiar to those Pharisees as it is to us, King David wrote: "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool,'" and they understood the meaning of the words precisely as we do: "The Lord" (that is, God the Father) "said to my

Lord" (that is, the Christ or Messias): "'Sit Thou on My right hand'"—and so forth. Now, it was an unheard-of thing among the Chosen People for any father or ancestor to say "Lord" to his own son or descendant. How could David call the Messias "My Lord" ("The Lord said to my Lord")? No matter how high a son rose—even if he became a king, like Saul, or a prime minister of most absolute power, like Joseph in Egypt, he would still bow down, he would fall on his face (Gen., XLVIII, 12) before his father. There is no other case in all the history of the Jewish people where a father or an ancestor said "Lord" to his own son.

The Messias must be David's son, they knew that well. "How then doth David in spirit call him 'Lord,'" Our Saviour said to them, "saying: 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool"'? If David then call him 'Lord,' how is he his son?"

And the gospel tells us: "No man was able to answer Him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions." But the answer which those blinded Pharisees could not give, we can give without the slightest trouble, yes, and even our little children: King David called the Messias "Lord," because the Messias or Christ is not only David's Son, but also David's God. That is why he called Him "Lord," saying: "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool.'" The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Who on account of His human nature is David's Son, because of His divine nature is David's Lord and God.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," that Second Divine Person had said a moment before, "with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with

thy whole mind: this is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets." If the Pharisees had more of love for God and neighbor, and less for their individual selves, they would have had more faith and knowledge and enlightenment. God grant that we, warned by their example, may humbly persevere in love for God and neighbor, remembering well what the Catechism tells us: "We sin against the love of God by all sin, but particularly by mortal sin."

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And entering into a boat, He passed over the water and came into His own city.

And, behold, they brought to him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

And, behold, some of the scribes said within themselves: "He blasphemeth."

And Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said: "Why do you think evil in your hearts?

"Whether is easier, to say: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee' or to say: 'Arise and walk'?

"But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins"—then said He to the man sick of the palsy: "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house."

And he arose, and went into his house.

And the multitudes, seeing it, feared, and glorified God, that gave such power to men. (Matt., IX, 1-8.)

THE MULTITUDES did not yet know that Our Saviour was God; so they "glorified God that gave such power *to men*." The scribes did not know either; if they did, they would not be thinking evil about Him in their hearts, nor saying "within themselves 'He blasphemeth'" because He used God's power of forgiving sins and, of course, thus publicly proclaimed that He had that power.

"Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee," He said to the sick man, the helpless paralytic, whom kind friends had brought to Our Saviour, stretched out like a corpse on his mattress or blanket. We know that dread disease as well as they did. We call it paralysis oftener than "palsy" nowadays; but they are only two different names for one misfortune.

Our divine Saviour was moved by their faith. Even they, very probably, did not yet know that He was God; but they evidently had immense faith in His goodness and loving-kindness and in His power to heal. "And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: 'Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee.'" He was hoping and beseeching for a bodily cure, but he received in the first place the cure of his soul. Our Lord healed first his soul and secondly his body.

"And, behold, some of the scribes said within themselves: 'He blasphemeth,'" because in forgiving sins, they reasoned, He was making Himself God.—"Whom dost thou make thyself?" the Jews said to Him on another occasion. "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself?" (John, VIII. 53.)—Certainly, in forgiving sins of His own power He was making Himself God. Sins are offenses against God; and only God can forgive

them, of His own power. We priests of Christ forgive sins over and over; but certainly not of our own power, but of Christ's power, which Christ has given to us, God always forgiving in heaven at the very second when we forgive upon earth.

Christ was truly saying "I am God" when He said "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and the scribes rightly understood Him. Where they blundered was, in not believing Him—in saying within themselves "He is blaspheming, because he is not God," instead of falling down at His sacred feet, like St. Thomas later on, and adoring Him.

And in order that they might know that He, so truly Man, was also truly God—that He, the Son of Man, *had* "power on earth to forgive sins"—He turned once more, in His mercy and power, to the paralytic and said to him: "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." And he arose, his limbs as supple and as full of life and action as yours or mine, picked up the mattress or blanket on which he had been lying, and walked back into the house out of which he had been carried a few moments before.

And a fear fell upon them, and they "glorified God." Let us glorify Him too and thank Him forever, for leaving here on earth with His bishops and priests, even when He Himself ascended back into heaven, that wondrous power which He Himself possessed and exercised, that "power on earth to forgive sins."

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And Jesus, answering, spoke again in parables to them, saying:

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son.

"And he sent his servants to call them that were invited, to the marriage; and they would not come.

"Again he sent other servants, saying: 'Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed and all things are ready; come ye to the marriage.'

"But they neglected and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise,

"And the rest laid hands on his servants and, having treated them contumeliously, put them to death.

"But when the king had heard of it, he was angry and, sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city.

"Then he saith to his servants: 'The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited, were not worthy.

" 'Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage.'

"And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good; and the marriage was filled with guests.

"And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment.

"And he saith to him: 'Friend, how comest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?' But he was silent.

"Then the king said to the waiters: 'Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

" 'For many are called, but few are chosen.' " (Matt., XXII, 1-14.)

GOD the Father is the King, Who made a marriage for His Son Our Lord Jesus Christ. The bride and spouse of Christ is His Church. Thus the Fathers and practically all of the commentators interpret this parable.

First, God the Father invited the Jews and Israelites, His own Chosen People, to this marriage-feast. He sent His servants to them, the patriarchs and prophets and, later on, Christ's apostles and disciples, and He kept sending them for many hundreds of years, "to call them that were invited, to the marriage; and they would not come." The Chosen People were too busy with their farms and merchandise to heed His invitations. They even laid hands upon His prophets and His apostles and, "having treated them contumeliously, put them to death."

Then the King "was angry and, sending His armies, He destroyed those murderers and burned their city." Only forty years after Our Saviour's Ascension Jerusalem, "their city," was sacked and leveled to the ground by Titus and his Roman armies. Those Roman armies, though they knew it not, were the armies of God, the instruments of His justice and His vengeance upon the nation that had betrayed and rejected Him, the people who were the first of all to be invited to the marriage-feast but who scorned the invitation.

Then the King "said to His servants: 'The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited, were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage.'" From His Chosen People, the Jews, God turned at last to the Gentiles. He would no longer have any one nation as His Chosen People, but the whole world; all the nations, all the Gentiles, should be invited to God's marriage-feast. The first Pope, St. Peter, met by appointment a large crowd of Roman Gentiles at Caesarea, and commanded that, without any circumcision or any other observance of the Mosaic Law, they should be baptized and thus received into the Church. After-

ward he explained to the other Apostles and Christians in Jerusalem what he had decided upon and done. And "they held their peace: and glorified God, saying: 'God then hath also to the Gentiles given repentance unto life.'" (Acts, XI, 18.) As St. Paul and St. Barnabas said to unbelieving Jews at Antioch of Pisidia: "To you it behoved us first to speak the word of God: but, because you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts., XIII, 46.)

Thus the King's servants, "going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good; and the marriage was filled with guests." We are among those guests. Thank God, we have the honor and the privilege of being among those invited guests at the marriage-feast of Christ with His bride and spouse, the Church. "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." (Apoc., XIX, 9.) But we must make sure that we have on "the wedding-garment," which means, the state of grace, freedom from mortal sin.

In the parable "the King went in to see the guests, and He saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And He saith to him: 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?' But he was silent. Then the King said to the waiters: 'Bind his hands and feet, and cast him out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

He came again therefore into Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum.

He, having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to Him and prayed Him to come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

Jesus therefore said to him: "Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not."

The ruler saith to Him: "Lord, come down, before that my son die."

Jesus saith to him: "Go thy way, thy son liveth." The man believed the word that Jesus said to him, and went his way.

And as he was going down, his servants met him: and they brought word, saying that his son lived.

"He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."

The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: "Thy son liveth"; and himself believed and his whole house. (John, IV, 46-53.)

THE "RULER" mentioned in to-day's gospel, was an important government official of some kind in Capharnaum. He had heard much about Our Saviour, but he was not yet a believer in Him; and it seems that he should be a disciple already, because Our Lord rebuked him for waiting for miracles before believing: "Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not." He received the rebuke with proper humility, without attempting any excuse or any defense of himself, and immediately repeated his prayer to Our Lord that He would come and cure his son, who "was at the point of death." His home in Capharnaum, where he had left his son dying or on the verge of death, was several miles from Cana; and instead of going all that distance with him, Our Saviour simply told him to return home, curing his son at the same moment and telling him so. "Go thy way," Our

Saviour said, "thy son liveth." And on his way home he was met by some of his servants, hastening to him with the good news of the boy's recovery. He found by inquiry that in Capharnaum the fever had left his son at the very hour when in Cana Jesus had said to him: "Thy son liveth."

Then immediately he became a true believer and a Christian; and not only he, but his entire household, his family and his servants. "The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: 'Thy son liveth'; and himself believed, and his whole house." He who should have believed long before without waiting for "signs and wonders," did believe at last when the signs and wonders were granted to him. Better late than never. And probably from that time on to the end of his life he made up for his former slothfulness by burning love and zeal, using every golden moment for the glory of God. And possibly he crowned all by a martyr's death, as did so very many of the first Christians.

Better any faith than no faith at all. Better a faith that comes late in life than unbelief to the moment of death. Better a faith that requires signs and wonders to prepare the way for it than infidelity and irreligion or false religion to the end. Better a sleeping or dormant faith, like that of those in mortal sin, than loss of faith or no faith whatever.

For while there's faith, there's hope. Even those who stay in mortal sin for years, if they keep the faith, have also hope. They look forward hopefully to Confession sometime, to a reconciliation with God at the hour of death if not before, to heaven at last, even though preceded by a tremendous purgatory. Only too often it may be that it is only partly hope with them, and partly presumption--

what the Catechism defines as "a rash expectation of salvation without making use of the proper means to obtain it." But some hope, for the most part, is also there; where there is even a dormant faith, there is at least a dormant hope.

God grant that we may ever have the living faith of those in the state of grace—the living faith which was granted at last to that "ruler" of to-day's gospel. That fever of his son, that sickness unto death, which brought him all the way from Capharnaum to Cana, was a great blessing in disguise to him and his house; for through it salvation came to them from Christ, with the temporal cure of the boy.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king who would take an account of his servants.

And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents.

And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and payment be made.

But that servant falling down, besought him, saying: "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him all the debt.

But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him an hundred pence: and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: "Pay what thou owest."

And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt.

Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved; and they came and told their lord all that was done.

Then his lord called him, and said to him: "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me:

"Shouldst not thou then have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?"

And his lord, being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt.

So also shall My heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts. (Matt., XVIII, 23-35.)

THE TALENT was not a coin, but a weight of gold or silver used as money is. The current talent of Our Saviour's time was worth about twelve hundred dollars; therefore the ten thousand talents, which the wicked servant in to-day's parable owed to his king, and which the king forgave him, was an immense sum equivalent to about twelve million dollars of our money.

The silver penny was a little coin worth less than twenty cents; and therefore the one-hundred pence which some poor fellow-servant owed to this wicked servant, would be less than twenty dollars.

He grabbed him by the throat and throttled him and choked him in his furious anger, shouting out "Pay what thou owest!", and finally cast him into prison, for a debt of twenty dollars, only a few moments after he himself had been forgiven a debt of twelve million dollars by his merciful sovereign.

That is the way we act on this earth, only too often. We are forgiven by God over and over debts and offenses which millions of money would not express; and then we turn about, sometimes in savage fury and anger, upon our fellow-man, and refuse

to forgive him some little injury he has done us or some little debt he owes us. How can we ever refuse to forgive anybody anything—we who ourselves have been forgiven so much? How ridiculous we make ourselves, treasuring up the little injuries some poor fellow-servant has done us, cherishing them and keeping them warm close to our hearts, till the opportunity comes to get our revenge! What do we look like, to the angels? What do we look like, to God?

We have to forgive others, if we wish to be forgiven ourselves. God forgives us our trespasses against Him only on that condition, that we forgive others their trespasses against us. This is so well understood that, instructed by our divine Lord Himself, we pray to Him in the "Our Father" in those very words: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." We plead with the Infinite Mercy for forgiveness of our immense sins and debts against Him, assuring Him that we on our part are forgiving other human beings their injuries and offenses against us. Only with that condition do we dare ask for pardon.

There must be no limit to our forgiveness. Not once, nor ten times, but over and over again—as often as there is occasion for it—we must forgive our fellow-servants. That was how our divine Lord came to tell this parable of to-day's gospel. "Then came Peter unto Him and said: 'Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?' Jesus saith to him: 'I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven times'" (Matt., XVIII, 21, 22), and immediately He went on to tell this parable.

The wicked servant in the parable who, after having been forgiven such an immense load of debt

by his king, turned so savagely upon the poor fellow-servant who owed him a paltry twenty dollars or so, was most severely punished. He was delivered over to the torturers till he paid the whole debt. And so, Our Saviour warns us in conclusion, it shall be done to us, if we dare to prove ourselves unforgiving and unmerciful to our fellow men and women: "So also shall My heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Then the Pharisees, going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Him in His speech.

And they sent to Him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying: "Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou dost not regard the person of men:

"Tell us, therefore, what dost thou think: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?"

But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: "Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites!

"Show Me the coin of the tribute." And they offered Him a penny.

And Jesus saith to them: "Whose image and inscription is this?"

They say to Him: "Caesar's." Then He saith to them: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." (Matt., XXII, 15-21.)

"MASTER, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth." When the disciples of the Pharisees, the young students, you might call them, whom the Pharisees were

training and educating in their principles and practices, said this to Our Saviour, they said what they did not mean nor believe. They believed that Our Lord was a false speaker, a blasphemer, a dangerous, misguided zealot, and that, far from teaching "the way of God in truth," He was teaching the way of Satan and his lying spirits. They believed that He was possessed by devils and that "by the prince of devils he cast out devils." (Matt., IX, 34.) But to "ensnare Him in His speech" and get Him into trouble with Herod and the Roman Government, in order that He might be placed in prison, where He could do no more speaking and teaching, these young students of the Pharisees deliberately lied and flattered, saying brazenly to Him the very opposite of what they thought about Him: "Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth."

They were planning to betray Him into treason, into treasonable speech, against the unpopular tribute or poll-tax about which they expected to draw Him out. They brought with them plenty of witnesses for the government, the "Herodians," as they were called, members of the political party which ardently favored King Herod and the Romans. They took Him to be a mere human being and nothing more, a mere crawling, fawning man of their own type. And so before putting the dangerous question to Him about the tribute to Caesar, they would smooth His feelings by their flattery and intense respect for Him: "Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth"; and then aroused His patriotic courage as a Jew by praising His well-known independence: "Neither carest thou for any man: for thou dost not regard the person of men."

So these oily and diplomatic young disciples of the Pharisees, having prepared the way so beautifully, and so completely to their own satisfaction, were ready at last for the question itself: "Tell us, therefore, what dost thou think: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?"

Our divine Saviour must have found this double-faced, low cunning of theirs peculiarly disgusting in such young people. "Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites!", He said to them. "Show Me the coin of the tribute." And they placed in His hand the shilling or silver penny, with which this tax had to be paid. He pointed to the image on one side of it and the inscription of some words on the other: "'Whose image and inscription is this?' They say to Him: 'Caesar's.' Then He saith to them: 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's.'"

The students of the Pharisees went away shamed and withered by His rebuke, in so far as they had any shame. They had laid their beautiful snare for Him all in vain. The Herodians could find no treason in His words. The patriotic Jews could not call His beautiful answer unpatriotic. And all men of all times find emphasized in that answer their twofold duty, namely, to the temporal power and the spiritual, to Country and Church, to Caesar and to God.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

As He was speaking these things unto them, behold, a certain ruler came up and adored Him, saying: "Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live."

And Jesus, rising up, followed him with His disciples.

And, behold, a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment.

For she said within herself: "If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed."

But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: "Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." And the woman was made whole from that hour.

And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout,

He said: "Give place; for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth." And they laughed Him to scorn.

And when the multitude was put forth, He went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose.

And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country. (Matt., IX, 18-26.)

THREE of the Evangelists give an account of this beautiful miracle, St. Mark and St. Luke as well as St. Matthew. Both St. Mark and St. Luke tell us that the ruler, the father of the dead girl, was a ruler of the synagogue at Capharnaum and that his name was Jairus. Whether he had received the faith yet or not, that is, the full belief in Our Lord as Christ and Messias, he certainly showed great faith in His power to work miracles. He fell down at His feet and adored Him, saying: "Lord, my daughter is even now dead, but come, lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live."

The Sacred Heart of Jesus was moved with mercy toward him. He pitied the disconsolate father who had lost his little daughter—a girl twelve years old, St. Mark and St. Luke say, and the latter adds that she was his only daughter. "And Jesus, rising up, followed him with His disciples."

Great multitudes of the people tried to follow

also, pressing and thronging upon Him; and in the midst of them a poor diseased woman showed a faith in Our Saviour as great in its way as that of Jairus. She had been troubled with an issue of blood for twelve years. Her disease had lasted the same number of years as the dead girl's life. And she had spent all she had on physicians, St. Mark says (Mark, v, 26), and was none the better, but rather worse. This woman came up behind Our Saviour in the crowds that were pressing upon Him, and "touched the hem of His garment; for she said within herself: 'If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed.' But Jesus, turning and seeing her, said: 'Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.' And the woman was made whole from that hour."

Our divine Lord found the house of Jairus crowded with people. Not only friends and relatives were there, who had gathered to condole with the bereaved family, but also the hired mourners, singers and musicians, according to the funeral customs of that time and place. Then, as St. Luke writes, Our Lord said to them: "'Weep not; the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.' And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." (Luke, VIII, 52, 53.)

When the house had been cleared of them, He went into the inner room where the little girl's dead body was lying, taking with Him Peter and James and John together with the girl's father and mother. St. Mark's Gospel gives us the original words 'Talitha, cumi," with their strange sound of warmth and of peaceful power, which Our Saviour used in raising her to life: "'Talitha, cumi,' which is, being interpreted, 'Damsel, I say to thee, arise!' And immediately the damsel rose up and walked:

and she was twelve years old: and they were astonished with a great astonishment. And He charged them strictly that no man should know it: and commanded that something should be given her to eat." (Mark, v, 41, 43.)

The Lord of life and death, the God Who created her out of nothing, the God Man Who was going to die for her in shame and agony so soon afterward —He Who loved her (as He loves each one of us) with the infinite, complete, undivided and indivisible love of the Infinite Being—precisely the same as though she or you or I were the only one—He gave her this second life on earth for His own wise reasons.—And He did not forget that the little girl would be hungry, after her sleep of death. And He "commanded that something should be given her to eat."

TWENTY-FOURTH (LAST) SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

When, therefore, you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place—he that readeth, let him understand—

Then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains;

And he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house;

And he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat;

And woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days!

But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath.

For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be.

And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened.

Then if any man shall say to you: "Lo, here is Christ, or there," do not believe him.

For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect.

Behold, I have told it to you beforehand.

If, therefore, they shall say to you: "Behold, He is in the desert," go ye not out: "Behold, He is in the closets," believe it not.

For as lightning cometh out of the east and appeareth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together.

And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved.

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.

And He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice: and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them.

And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh.

So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors.

Amen, I say to you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.

Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass. (Matt., XXIV, 15-35.)

THIS GOSPEL refers partly to the destruction of Jerusalem and partly to the end of the world. The complete and final destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, afterward emperor of Rome, took place nearly nineteen hundred years ago, about forty years after Our Saviour's Ascension.

When the end of the world will be, no one knows. "Of that day and hour no one knoweth," Our Saviour said, "no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone. And as in the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till that day in which Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not, till the flood came and took them all away, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matt., XXIV, 36-39.)

"Watch ye, therefore," He said, "because you know not what hour your Lord will come." (Matt., XXIV, 42.) And His solemn warning is just as pertinent to the particular judgment when Christ our Judge comes to each one of us individually at the moment of death, as to the general judgment at the end of the world when all shall "see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty."

The day and hour of the general judgment are not known to anybody, not even to the angels of heaven, but only to God Himself. The hour of your death or mine may be known to the angels, to the devils, to saints or prophets on this earth, sometimes to the physicians; but the hour of the end of the world is known to God only. One thing we are sure of from Our Saviour's own words, namely, that there will still be human beings living on this earth, "eating and drinking, marrying and giving

in marriage" when that end of the world comes. "Amen, I say to you that this generation shall not pass till all these things shall be done." This human race, this human generation, shall not pass from the face of the earth till all these things which our divine Saviour has prophesied, are fully accomplished.

To-day is the last of the Sundays after Pentecost. To-day with its following week-days completes the Church's year. Next Sunday, the first Sunday of Advent, begins a new year of the Church. On to-day and on next Sunday both, the Church in the two gospels she selects for the Masses, warns us once more very solemnly of the Coming of Christ—the momentous, everlasting, decisive Coming of Christ—not only publicly at the end of the world, but also privately at the hour of our death.

May we heed and weigh and ponder that dreadful warning! At this turning of the years may our free will freely yield itself to the infinitely loving and merciful will of the all-just and almighty God. And may His grace fill us and overflow in us and sweep us along through the coming year and the others that may follow it, in the path of His commandments and the diligent use of His sacraments, watching for Him, loving Him and serving Him, ready always for His coming! "Blessed is that servant whom, when his Lord shall come, He shall find so doing!" (Matt., XXIV, 46.)

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (BIRTHDAY)

(I Class—June 24th)

Now Elizabeth's full time of being delivered was come, and she brought forth a son.

And her neighbors and kinsfolks heard that the Lord had showed His great mercy toward her, and they congratulated with her.

And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him by his father's name Zachary.

And his mother answering said: "Not so, but he shall be called John."

And they said to her: "There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name."

And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

And demanding a writing-table, he wrote, saying: "John is his name." And they all wondered.

And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed and he spoke, blessing God.

And fear came upon all their neighbors; and all these things were noised abroad over all the hill-country of Judea;

And all they that had heard them, laid them up in their heart, saying: "What a one, think ye, shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him."

And Zachary his father was filled with the Holy Ghost; and he prophesied, saying:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people." (Luke, I, 57-68.)

THE BIRTH of St. John the Baptist was surrounded with wonders, his life was a wonderful life, his destiny a wonderful destiny—to be the forerunner, namely, of our divine Saviour, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord'" (John, I, 23), the angel whom God sent into the world before the face of His only-begotten Son. (Mark, I, 2.) To-day's gospel speaks of his birth and his circumcision when he was given his name, because to-day is the feast of his birth.

The Church celebrates only three birth-days: that of our divine Lord Himself, that of His blessed Mother and that of St. John the Baptist. Nearly all the feasts of all the other saints commemorate, not their birth, but their death and entrance into heavenly glory. The others, with rare exceptions perhaps like St. Joseph, were not saints at their birth, but only at their death.

But St. John the Baptist was a saint at his birth, and three months before his birth, from the moment when, filled with the Holy Ghost and justified and sanctified, he "leaped for joy" (Luke, I, 44) in the womb of St. Elizabeth when Mary the Mother of God crossed the threshold of their home.

The Jewish priesthood was a married priesthood; and Zachary, the father of St. John the Baptist, belonged to this holy order. He was performing his priestly duties at the altar of incense in the Temple when the archangel Gabriel suddenly appeared to him. The angel told him that his wife St. Elizabeth, who had been barren all through their married life and was now in her old age, would conceive and bear a son: "and thou shalt call his name John; and thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice, in his nativity." (Luke, I, 13, 14.) But Zachary at first showed some doubt, or at least lack of ready, spontaneous faith, in the angel's words, and was punished by being struck dumb. "I am Gabriel, who stand before God," the archangel said; "and am sent to speak to thee and to bring thee these good tidings. And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak, until the day wherein these things shall come to pass; because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time." (Luke, I, 19, 20.)

When St. John was born and about to be cir-

cumcised, they wanted to call him "by his father's name Zachary. And his mother, answering, said: 'Not so, but he shall be called John.' And they said to her: 'There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.'" And they appealed to his father, who was still dumb, making signs to him. Zachary immediately asked for a writing-tablet and wrote on it: "John is his name"; and at once his "mouth was opened and his tongue loosed and he spoke, blessing God." His speech was restored to him as miraculously as it had been taken away.

Truly a wonderful birth and surrounded by wonders and marvels, was that of St. John the Baptist. "And they all wondered." What was this wonderful child going to be? "What a one, think ye, shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him."

But St. Zachary knew well, and St. Elizabeth: the forerunner of the long-expected Christ-God, St. John would be, His herald, the preparer of His ways. When St. John arrived upon this earth, Jesus Christ Himself was very, very near. "And Zachary his father was filled with the Holy Ghost: and he prophesied, saying: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people.'"

STS. PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES
(I Class—June 29th)

And Jesus came into the quarters of Caesarea Philippi: and He asked His disciples, saying: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?"

But they said: "Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets."

Jesus saith to them: "But whom do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus answering said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven.

"And I say to thee: that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;

"And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt., XVI, 13-19.)

THIS grand, public, fearless confession of the divinity of Christ by St. Peter is placed by the Church as gospel of the Mass on this Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. "But whom do *you* say that I am?" Our Saviour asked His disciples. Some people were saying, like the conscience-stricken King Herod, that He was St. John the Baptist come to life again. Some were saying that He was Elias, who has never died and who, sometime before the end of the world, has to come back to earth and die his death like the rest of mankind. Some were saying that He was Jeremias returned, or one of the other prophets. "But whom do *you* say that I am?" He asked His disciples. "Simon Peter answered and said: 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

It was a noble confession of faith, and most richly rewarded. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona," our divine Saviour said to St. Peter, "because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven. And I say to thee that thou art Peter; and upon this Rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail

against it; and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."

We see the greatness of St. Peter. Given all power by Christ Himself, named by Him the Rock upon which He would build His Church and the Gate-Keeper of the kingdom of heaven, he was the Prince of the Apostles, the Vicar of Christ on this earth after Christ's Ascension, the Visible Head of Christ's Church, the first of the popes.

The greatness of St. Paul was of a different kind. He did not hold any supreme position among the apostles; he was a priest and a bishop like the others, but far from being a pope. He worked humbly and suffered humbly under St. Peter, like the other apostles. But his work was so extraordinarily successful, so widespread and far-reaching, and his preaching and writings so rich and so deeply and broadly filled with the doctrines of His Master Christ, that even among the apostles he shines out as a star of intense and unique brightness. Nearly one-third of the New Testament is made up of the fourteen inspired Epistles of St. Paul. The Church herself again and again calls him in the Mass and in the Office "the Illustrious Doctor," "the Doctor of the Nations," "the Teacher of the World." Nearly all the nations of the known world of his time were evangelized by him.

St. Peter and St. Paul died for Christ in the same city on the same day under the same tyrant, the Emperor Nero. The city was Rome. The day was this day which we are celebrating with our Mother, the Church. This Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, the 29th of June, is the anniversary of their

glorious martyrdom. Not within sight of each other, some few miles apart, although in the same imperial city, on the 29th of June about thirty-four years after Our Saviour's Ascension, St. Peter was crucified head downward on the Vatican Hill, and St. Paul was beheaded just beyond the walls. And in the Mass and Office of this Feast the Church prays: "O God, Who hast consecrated this day by the martyrdom of Thy apostles Peter and Paul, grant to Thy Church, to follow their precepts from whom she received the beginnings of religion, through Our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son Who lives and reigns, God with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen."

THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD

(II Class—July 1st)

Jesus therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said: "It is consummated." And bowing His head, He gave up the ghost.

Then the Jews (because it was Parasceve), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath Day (for that was a great Sabbath Day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

The soldiers therefore came; and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with Him.

But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

But one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side; and immediately there came out blood and water.

And he that saw it, hath given testimony; and his testimony is true. (John, XIX, 30-35.)

THE most precious blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ was the price of our redemption. In His great love for us Our Saviour paid that price willingly and gladly—"He Who hath loved us," St. John wrote in the Apocalypse, "and washed us from our sins in His own blood." (Apoc., I, 5.)

First at His Circumcision, when He was only eight days old; then the night before He died, at the agony in the garden, when "His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground" (Luke, XXII, 44); then at the scourging, at the crowning with thorns, at the blows on the face which He received from the rough soldiers and servants who held Him prisoner that Thursday night and Friday forenoon; and all along the road to Calvary, where He fell so often and was so often struck and beaten, carrying His cross; and on the cross, where the nails pierced through His hands and feet for three hours or more before He died—He was paying the price of our redemption, His own most precious blood.

Even after He was dead, His precious blood still flowed for us. St. John the Beloved, Who was an eye-witness of it, standing at the foot of the cross with the Mother of God and Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalen, tells us in the gospel of to-day that "one of the soldiers opened His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony," St. John continues, "and his testimony is true."

There was something which science cannot explain about that flowing of blood and water from the side of our divine Lord after He was dead. Death itself could not quench His love for us nor stop the shedding of His precious blood. Therefore it is, that St. John the Beloved Disciple insists upon it so

emphatically, assuring us that he himself witnessed it. In his intense humility he always speaks of himself in the third person, as if disliking to say "I," and deeming himself unworthy of mention. Just as a moment before he wrote "When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and *the disciple* standing whom He loved" (John, XIX, 26), so now he writes about this final flowing of the precious blood "And *he that* saw it hath given testimony: and his testimony is true."

"Put Me as a seal upon thy heart," Christ says to His Church, and to the individual soul, in the Canticle of Canticles (Cant., VIII, 6),—"Put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death. . . . Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." And death itself could not quench His love for us, nor stop His most precious blood from flowing for us.

His blood was the price of your redemption. See how you should value yourself, how highly you should value your immortal soul. You were redeemed, not with gold or silver or other stuff of that kind, but with the blood of Christ, as St. Peter wrote in his First Epistle: "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled." (I Pet., I, 18, 19.) "And you are not your own," St. Paul says, "for you are bought, with a great price." (I Cor., VI, 19, 20.) Therefore value yourself at your proper value. And remember Whose you are. And live accordingly, or keep trying to.

THE VISITATION

(II Class—July 2nd)

And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda,

And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth.

And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost,

And she cried out with a loud voice and said: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb.

"And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?

"For, behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy!

"And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord."

And Mary said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord:

"And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." (Luke, I, 39-47.)

IMMEDIATELY after she had said "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke, I, 38) and had become the Mother of God, Mary rose up and visited her cousin St. Elizabeth. Her long journey from Nazareth up the hills to that city of Juda where Zachary and Elizabeth had their home, was prompted by charity and kindness toward her cousin; but she also had higher and more mysterious motives. She was acting from God's will more even than from her own. God the Son was in her womb. God the Holy Ghost was guiding and directing her, inspiring and illuminating her every thought, word and action.

At the first sound of her voice when she entered Elizabeth's home St. John the Baptist, the Forerunner and Herald of Mary's divine Son, was cleansed from original sin, justified and sanctified; and "leaped for joy" in the womb of his mother. At that same sweet sound of Mary's voice Elizabeth herself "was filled with the Holy Ghost, and she cried out with a loud voice and said: 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For as soon as the voice of thy salvation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy! And blessed art thou that hast believed! Because those things shall be accomplished, that were spoken to thee by the Lord.'"

Yes, truly, they were all accomplished, those things that were spoken to Mary by the Angel of the Lord. She brought forth her Son and she called His name Jesus. He is great and is the Son of the Most High and sits upon the throne of David and reigns in the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom truly there shall never, never be any end.

That sweet voice of Mary—we poor sinners shall hear it, we all trust, up in the glory of heaven. That salutation of Mary—we shall receive it when we enter into our everlasting rest. Sweetly and gently, yet very powerfully, that Mother's voice is pleading for us even now, with Him, Who was in her womb when St. Elizabeth called her blessed, and Who is her Son forever and ever to come, as truly and literally as He is the Son of God the Father.

But Mary, rapt and impelled and illuminated and inspired by the Holy Ghost, was not thinking much about herself and her own blessedness at that moment. Her intellect and heart and soul were

filled and overflowing with God. On God her mind was fixed. God was her whole thought—the Holy Ghost, Who had come upon her; the Most High, Who had overshadowed her; the Son, Who was in her womb. "And Mary said: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' "

ST. JAMES THE GREATER, APOSTLE

(II Class—July 25th)

Then came to Him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, adoring, and asking something of Him.

Who said to her: "What wilt thou?" She saith to Him: "Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, in Thy kingdom."

And Jesus, answering, said: "You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?" They say to Him: "We can."

He saith to them: "My chalice indeed you shall drink: but to sit on My right or left hand, is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father." (Matt., xx, 20-23.)

TWO of the apostles were named James, and we call one of these St. James the Greater and the other St. James the Less. To-day, July the 25th, is the Feast of St. James the Greater.

He has been called St. James the Greater from the very beginning, from the times of the apostles—some think, because he was a larger man physically than his namesake, and others suppose, because he was favored more highly by our divine Lord.

St. James the Greater was one of the "three favored apostles," Peter and James and John his

brother. Our Saviour took these three with Him into the inner room when He raised to life the daughter of Jairus; they alone of all the twelve witnessed His Transfiguration on the mountain; and these three were also near Him on Holy Thursday night during His agony in the garden.

Of these three St. James and St. John were brothers, St. John the younger of the two. They were sons of Zebedee, a prosperous fisherman who had more than one fishing-boat and who employed not only his sons, but other fishermen besides, netting fish for the markets, on the great lake of Galilee. Their mother, a relative of the Blessed Virgin, according to some authorities, was named Salome.

Quite early in life St. James and St. John left their father and their home to follow our divine Lord. St. Mark tells us regarding it that Our Lord "saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship. And forthwith He called them. And leaving their father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed Him." (Mark, i. 19, 20.) Rapidly they became, next to St. Peter himself, the most favored and the most highly trusted of all the apostles.

At the time which to-day's gospel speaks of, it is probable that they were not yet saints. For apparently it was with their full consent that their mother Salome asked Our Saviour for them the two highest places in His kingdom, one on His right hand and the other on His left. They wanted to be after no one, not even after St. Peter, but next and highest and nearest of all to Christ Himself. It might be an honorable ambition, but it would seem to harmonize only poorly with the heroic humility of the saints.

Our divine Lord said gently to their mother: "You know not what you ask." And then He turned to the two brothers and said: "Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?" They answered: "We can." Did they know what chalice He referred to, the chalice of blood and death, of torture and shame, the chalice which He prayed about to His Father in heaven during that agony in the garden Holy Thursday night: "Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me: but yet, not My will, but Thine, be done"? (Luke, XXII, 42.) Did they know that that was the chalice He meant? It seems certain that they did know. And they bravely answered him: "We can." He said to them: "My chalice indeed you shall drink. But to sit on My right or left hand, is not Mine to give to *you*, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father."

St. James the Greater was the first of all the apostles to drink that bitter chalice. He died for Christ about nine years after Our Saviour's Ascension in Jerusalem. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that "Herod the king stretched forth his hands to afflict some of the Church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword." (Acts, XII, 1-2.)

Thus St. James the Greater kept his word with His Master Christ. He drank of Christ's bitter chalice. He said he could do so, and when the time came God helped him to do it.

May he pray for us in his everlasting glory that we, every one of us in his turn, may obtain our little share of that glory when earth-life and purgatory are over.

ST. ANNE

(II Class—July 26th)

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a treasure hidden in a field. Which a man having found, hid it, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls,

"Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way and sold all that he had and bought it.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea and gathering together of all kind of fishes;

"Which, when it was filled, they drew out and, sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth.

"So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from among the just,

"And shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"Have ye understood all these things?" They say to Him: "Yes."

He said unto them: "Therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old." (Matt., XIII, 44-52.)

THE simple methods of entertaining guests in the old days seem very beautiful though very strange to us. One way was that which Our Saviour alludes to in the last verse of this gospel. The owner of the house would unlock his treasure-chest or his treasure room and show one after another to his admiring guests the curious and the precious things, old and new, which he and his ancestors had accumulated there, each of them of course with its own little story attached to it.

Like to this householder, our divine Lord said, is the scholar or scribe well instructed about the kingdom of heaven. He brings forth out of his mind and memory one thing after another, old and new, to describe it and illustrate it to his hearers. He tells them parable after parable in illustration of the kingdom of heaven, as our divine Saviour Himself so often did, and as He had been doing at that very moment.

The saints were the wise men and women who most fully appreciated the kingdom of heaven. We ordinary Christians, thank God, appreciate it to some extent. Even we know that heaven is the only thing really worth while, the only thing of lasting importance; but there are moments and hours and sometimes whole days when many of us let ourselves forget that knowledge. The saints would never let themselves forget it, not even for one minute or one second. We ordinary Christians do not sell all we have to purchase heaven or to make sure of it; but the saints sold all they had, or rather gave away all they had, in order to make sure of it and in order to place their whole lifelong undivided love and undivided attention upon God and His heaven.

Our Saviour in this gospel compared the kingdom of heaven to a buried treasure in a field. And some man, who did not own the field, accidentally uncovered this treasure and, hiding it again, went off and sold all that he had in order to buy that field and of course with the field the treasure. Again Our Saviour told them about a pearl-merchant who bought and sold pearls; and one day when he came across a most remarkable pearl, he hurried away and sold all that he had in this world, to come back and purchase that pearl of great price. Like that

pearl of great price and like that treasure, is heaven, as Our Saviour spoke of it and as His saints appreciated it.

To-day is the Feast of one of the greatest of those saints, St. Anne, the mother of Mary. She was of royal blood, of the Tribe of Judah and the Family of King David; but she did not think that of any account compared with God and His heaven. She might have made herself richer, more prominent in this world, more fashionable and gaudy and glittering among her fellow-men and women; but like all the saints, she was too wise to divide her attention, or waste her love on little baubles of that kind. She was all for God and heaven. St. Anne preferred comparative poverty, plainness and obscurity. When she saw the treasure and the pearl of great price, she was wise enough to make sure of that and to let everything else go. Refusing to be distracted or scatter-brained—with her whole heart she loved God, with her whole mind and her constant attention she appreciated heaven.

God gave her a beginning of heaven even on this earth when He gave her Mary for her daughter. And up above forever and ever He gives her a glory that is prominent and outstanding even amid the great glories of angels and saints. For St. Anne is the Mother of their Queen.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

(II Class—August 6th)

And after six days Jesus taketh unto Him Peter and James and John his brother and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart.

And He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun. And His garments became white as snow.

And, behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with Him.

And Peter, answering, said to Jesus: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee and one for Moses and one for Elias."

And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And, lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him."

And the disciples, hearing, fell upon their face and were very much afraid.

And Jesus came and touched them and said to them: "Arise and fear not."

And they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one but only Jesus.

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: "Tell the vision to no man till the Son of Man be risen from the dead." (Matt., XVII, 1-9.)

OUR divine Saviour had been speaking to His apostles, as He so often did, about His passion and death. And six days afterward He ascended Mount Thabor, taking with Him only Peter and James and John, and was transfigured before them.

Telling them about His passion and death always saddened them and discouraged them. They were not saints yet, and they were very far away from the spiritual wisdom and understanding which Catholics now have, and which the apostles had after Pentecost Sunday. God the Holy Ghost had not yet descended upon them. That divine Spirit of Wisdom was not yet dwelling in their souls and in the Church, as He is now. Perhaps Our Saviour feared that, since even hearing about His passion

discouraged them so much, seeing it with their own eyes some months later, might weaken their faith. It may be that it was partly to prepare them for witnessing that dreadful humiliation of Good Friday without ceasing to believe in Him, that He was transfigured before them on Mount Thabor.

His face shone as the sun, and His garments became white as snow, and Moses and Elias appeared in majesty, talking with Him about that same passion and death which He was so soon to undergo. It was like a little momentary glimpse of heaven to the three favored apostles. They were thrilled with a mysterious joy and happiness, far different from anything which they had ever before experienced; and quite naturally they wanted to hold on to it, if they could, and make it last. St. Peter certainly did; for he said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias!" Three little shelters of green boughs, or possibly tents, "tabernacles" as they called them, for Jesus Christ and the Lawgiver and the Prophet: the apostles themselves felt no need of shelter from wind or rain, if that thrilling joy would only last!

But no joy lasts in *this* life. There is no heaven on earth. "A bright cloud overshadowed them." A voice from the cloud: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him!", and the apostles, trembling with mysterious terror, fell upon their faces on the ground; till their Master came and touched them gently and said: "Arise and fear not." And "lifting up their eyes, they saw no one but only Jesus."

The transfiguration was over. The glory had departed. His divinity was once more completely

hidden. It was the dear, familiar, human face of our divine Lord, Which *they* knew so well, and the plain, cheap garments of the poor, no longer shining.

But the vision had the effect which Our Lord intended. They went down the slope of the mountain, following their Master, wiser and braver than they had ascended it. They persevered in their faith and their loyalty to Him; even when they saw Him, the same favored three, in the Garden of Olives Holy Thursday night—even through all the shame and degradation of His passion and death—even "till the Son of Man was risen from the dead."

ST. LAWRENCE, MARTYR

(II Class—August 10th)

Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat, falling into the ground, die,

Itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal.

If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also shall My minister be. If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honor. (John, XII, 24-26.)

ST. LAWRENCE died in Rome on his famous gridiron August 10th, 258, that is, over sixteen hundred and fifty years ago; and even here on this forgetful earth God the Father honored him immensely more after those sixteen and a half centuries than he was honored at the time of his death. His name is more famous in the world than ever; children are still named after him; churches

are dedicated in his honor; his feast is kept every year on the day on which he died, a double feast of the second class. From the Pope to the humblest priest, every bishop and priest in every nation of the world to-day is celebrating the Mass in honor of St. Lawrence and reading his Office in the Breviary. "If any man minister to Me," Our Saviour said, "him will My Father honor."

In many places we have relics of St. Lawrence's holy body, that was roasted on a gridiron for the Christian Faith over sixteen hundred and fifty years ago. St. Lawrence himself left his body at that date, and all the centuries since has been with Christ high up in the glory of heaven. "If any man minister to Me," Our Saviour said, "let him follow Me; and where I am, there also shall My minister be."

"Turn me over; that side is *done* now," St. Lawrence said with a happy smile a few moments before death came to him. He did not have any excessive love for his little earth-life; he rather hated it for Christ's sake. "He that loveth his life shall lose it," Our Saviour said; "and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal."

In the case of many of God's saints the great fruit of all their labors and pains was not ripened and harvested during their lives, but only at their death and after their death. They worked extremely hard on this earth for God and souls. They suffered joyfully at every opportunity—even went out of their way to seek for suffering—for love of Christ and in humble imitation of Him. But for the fruit of it all, the glory to God, and the souls for God that they gained and saved—they had to wait patiently to see that. In heaven after their death they saw the fruit of their work. Every canonized

saint is surrounded in heaven by multitudes of souls who owe their salvation, under God, to him. During their lives they brought some souls to God; but at their death, and for long centuries after their death, they brought immense multitudes.

Place a grain of wheat on a dry rock, and it will neither increase nor multiply nor bring forth fruit; it will remain alone, gradually hardening up until it crumbles into dust. But throw the same grain of wheat into the ground where, under the influence of nature's chemistry, it breaks up and decomposes and dies; and much new wheat will spring up from it. "Amen, amen, I say to you," Our Saviour said, "unless the grain of wheat, falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

St. Lawrence, Martyr of Christ, died on his gridiron over sixteen hundred and fifty years ago. May his fruit of souls for God continue increasing more and more until the end of time!

THE ASSUMPTION

(I Class—August 15th)

Now it came to pass as they went that He entered into a certain town; and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house.

And she had a sister called Mary who, sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard His word.

But Martha was busy about much serving. Who stood and said: "Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me."

And the Lord, answering, said to her: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things.

But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke, x, 38-42.)

TO-DAY is a very great feast: not only a double feast of the first class with an octave, but also a holyday of obligation.

To-day's feast, we might say, is four feasts in one; for its celebration includes: first, Our Lady's most holy death; secondly, her resurrection from the dead by her divine Son; thirdly, her assumption into heaven; and, fourthly, her coronation up in heaven by the three divine Persons of the most holy Trinity as Queen of Heaven, Queen of Angels and Saints. Certainly Mary's everlasting glory is unique, immensely higher, immensely more sublime and more majestic, than that of any other creature human or angelic. As Our Saviour said in to-day's gospel about another Mary, we may say about the Blessed Virgin: "Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Of course, the Mary of to-day's gospel was not the Blessed Virgin, but the sister of Martha and Lazarus who, according to a well supported opinion, was the same as St. Mary Magdalen. Martha was busy about the house preparing a good dinner for her divine Master, while her sister Mary was sitting at His feet drinking in His doctrines and instructions. Martha is sometimes taken as a type of the active life, which good Catholics live in the world, and Mary as a type of the contemplative life of monasteries and convents. And Martha appealed to Our Saviour to make her sister Mary get up and help her with the work; but "the Lord, answering, said to her: 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things; but one thing is

necessary; Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.' "

The Blessed Virgin Mary is, of course, the best and the most supremely perfect model of both lives, the active and the contemplative. She was "busy about many things," but she was never over-anxious or troubled about them. Nobody ever, so constantly, at every moment of life, or so thoroughly, realized and appreciated that "but one thing is necessary," as the Blessed Virgin did. She prepared the meals and did all the other kind of woman's work for her divine Son till He was about thirty years old, and for St. Joseph till he left this world. But she was never distracted by all those labors and duties of the active life, not even for one moment, from her life-long union with God, her remembrance of His Presence, her prayerful concentration upon Him, her intense attention to Him, her most elevated contemplation.

Active or contemplative, no matter what our vocation and calling may be, we can all model ourselves upon Mary. We can all try to imitate her, as we say, but of course meaning the most feeble, far-off imitation, without any thought of approaching near to her wonderful, most extraordinary virtues. And we can all pray to her, as, thank God, we do, with the very greatest confidence.

Because the Virgin and the Queen is also the Mother, our mother, the mother of our souls, which she adopted at the foot of the cross and cherishes in the glory of heaven. Let us specially pray to her on this great Feast of her Assumption; and may she pray for us "now and at the hour of our death!"

ST. JOACHIM

(II Class—August 16th)

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham begot Isaac. And Isaac begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Judas and his brethren.

And Judas begot Phares and Zaras of Thamar. And Phares begot Esron. And Esron begot Aram.

And Aram begot Aminadab. And Aminadab begot Naasson. And Naasson begot Salmon.

And Salmon begot Booz of Rahab. And Booz begot Obed of Ruth. And Obed begot Jesse.

And Jesse begot David the King. And David the King begot Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias.

And Solomon begot Roboam. And Roboam begot Abia. And Abia begot Asa.

And Asa begot Josaphat. And Josaphat begot Joram. And Joram begot Ozias.

And Ozias begot Joatham. And Joatham begot Achaz. And Achaz begot Ezechias.

And Ezechias begot Manasses. And Manassses begot Amon. And Amon begot Josias.

And Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren in the transmigration of Babylon.

And after the transmigration of Babylon Jechonias begot Salathiel. And Salathiel begot Zorobabel.

And Zorobabel begot Abiud. And Abiud begot Eliacim. And Eliacim begot Azor.

And Azor begot Sadoc. And Sadoc begot Achim. And Achim begot Eliud.

And Eliud begot Eleazar. And Eleazar begot Mathan. And Mathan begot Jacob.

And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus Who is called Christ. (Matt., 1, 1-16.)

TWENTY days or so after the Feast of St. Anne (July 26th) the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Anne's husband, the great St. Joachim. Like the feast of St. Anne, it is a double feast of the second class—since 1879, when Pope Leo XIII raised it to that dignity.

St. Joachim was the father of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and therefore the nearest male relative of our divine Lord according to Our Lord's human nature. Nobody, excepting the Mother of God herself and St. Anne, was as near in blood-relationship to Our Saviour as St. Joachim.

In the gospel of to-day St. Matthew writes the human genealogy of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the Hebrew custom, that is, making no account whatever of women. But in tracing it from Abraham through David and Zorobabel down to St. Joseph, he is tracing it down to Mary, as every Hebrew would understand well; because Mary and Joseph were of the same Tribe and Family. Both were of royal descent; and St. Joachim, the father of Mary, could trace his ancestry back to King David just as clearly and directly as could St. Joseph's father, Jacob.

Nearly two thousand years before the birth of Christ, God promised Abraham that the Christ would be directly descended from him. "To Abraham were the promises made and to his Seed," St. Paul writes. "He saith not 'and to his seeds,' as of many; but as of One: 'and to thy Seed,' Which is Christ." (Gal., III, 16.) "And in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen., XXII, 18.) So St. Matthew begins his genealogy from Abraham: "Abraham begot Isaac." And God said again to Isaac: "In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen., XXVI, 4.) "And

Isaac begot Jacob." God said to Jacob: "In thee and in thy Seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen., XXVIII, 14.) "And Jacob begot Juda and his brethren," twelve sons altogether, from whom are descended the Twelve Tribes of Israel. And on his deathbed Jacob said to Juda: "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till He come that is to be sent; and He shall be the expectation of nations." (Gen., XLIX, 10.) And speaking also from his deathbed to Joseph, another of his sons, Jacob called the same expected Christ or Messias "the Desire of the everlasting hills" (Gen., XLIX, 26), indicating that not only humankind, but all creation, was longing for His coming.

At last He came in holy Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago. And when He had come, one of those who knew Him best, the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew, began his inspired history of Christ by tracing the direct descent of Christ's foster-father St. Joseph, and therefore of Christ's Mother Mary, through Zorobabel and Solomon and David and Juda and Jacob and Isaac back to Abraham.

On Mary's side, if Hebrew custom allowed the genealogies to pass through the mothers, St. Joachim would be one of the links in that long chain; and a link all the more precious and holy for being so very near to the divine End of the chain, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

May St. Joachim pray for us! For between St. Joachim and our divine Lord there is only St. Joachim's daughter, Mary the Mother of God.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

(II Class—August 24th)

And it came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray; and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God.

And when day was come He called unto Him His disciples, and He chose twelve of them (whom also He named "Apostles"):

Simon, whom He surnamed Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon who is called Zelotes,

And Jude the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who was the traitor.

And coming down with them, He stood in a plain place and the company of His disciples and a very great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the sea-coast both of Tyre and Sidon,

Who were come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases. And they that were troubled with unclean spirits, were cured.

And all the multitude sought to touch Him. For virtue went out from Him and healed all. (Luke, VI, 12-19.)

WE SEE from this gospel of St. Bartholomew's Day that it was Our Saviour Himself that gave the name or title of "Apostles" to the Twelve—"whom also He named 'Apostles'." We see also how our divine Lord prepared for choosing these twelve from the multitude of His disciples, by a whole night of prayer. "He went out into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God"; and then "when day was come" He called His disciples up to Him and chose from among their number the twelve apostles.

A whole night of prayer—of that wonderful,

most mysterious prayer of our divine Lord—was His preparation for the choice of the Twelve. When Our Saviour prayed, He was praying, we might say in one sense, to Himself; or at least, He was praying in His human nature to the Godhead and the divine nature Which is no more truly in the Father and the Holy Ghost than in Him the only-begotten Son. A whole night of that prayer, He considered, was not too great a preparation for the choosing of the twelve apostles.

And then, having made the choice and election—St. Luke and the others give the names, as you have just now heard them in the gospel of to-day—He came down from the mountain with the Twelve and stood on level ground, or "in a plain place," as St. Luke expresses it, and cast out unclean spirits and healed diseases and spoke to the multitudes gathered there from all parts "to hear Him."

And probably noticing that His disciples and even His apostles were poor people, and, moved by His special love for the poor, His own class—for He Himself had been born in a stable, and many a time during His public preaching had "not where to lay His head" (Matt., VIII, 20), and did not own either the cross He died on or even the tomb He was buried in—He said to His disciples, as St. Luke directly continues from the gospel of to-day: "Blessed are ye, poor; for yours is the Kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now; for you shall be filled" (Luke, VI, 20, 21); and a moment later: "Woe to you that are rich, for you have *your* consolation."

So our divine Saviour chose and elected His apostles, poor and weak and simple, confounding worldly wisdom, and making nothing of worldly wealth and power, so that "no flesh should glory in

His sight" as St. Paul writes (1 Cor., 1, 29), but that the whole world may know, as it must and will know sooner or later, that he that glories with any lasting glory, must glory, not in himself, but "in the Lord."

One of these twelve was St. Bartholomew, whose Feast the Church celebrates to-day. He clung to Christ and faithfully followed Him and persevered to the end, as did all the apostles excepting "Judas Iscariot, who was the traitor." He preached the Gospel and spread Christianity in Persia and Asia Minor and even in some parts of India. Like all the apostles, he died a martyr of Christ. He shed his blood and died for his divine Master somewhere in Armenia. May he intercede for us, especially on this his Feast; that our death too, even though it be a peaceful death, may be in some true sense a death for Christ.

NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(II Class—September 8th)

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham:

Abraham begot Isaac. And Isaac begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Judas and his brethren.

And Judas begot Phares and Zaras of Thamar. And Phares begot Esron. And Esron begot Aram.

And Aram begot Aminadab. And Aminadab begot Naasson. And Naasson begot Salmon.

And Salmon begot Booz of Rahab. And Booz begot Obed of Ruth. And Obed begot Jesse.

And Jesse begot David the King. And David the King begot Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias.

And Solomon begot Roboam. And Roboam begot Abia. And Abia begot Asa.

And Asa begot Josaphat. And Josaphat begot Joram. And Joram begot Ozias.

And Ozias begot Joatham. And Joatham begot Achaz. And Achaz begot Ezechias.

And Ezechias begot Manasses. And Manasses begot Amon. And Amon begot Josias.

And Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren in the transmigration of Babylon.

And after the transmigration of Babylon Jechonias begot Salathiel. And Salathiel begot Zorobabel.

And Zorobabel begot Abiud. And Abiud begot Eliacim. And Eliacim begot Azor.

And Azor begot Sadoc. And Sadoc begot Achim. And Achim begot Eliud.

And Eliud begot Eleazar. And Eleazar begot Mathan. And Mathan begot Jacob.

And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus Who is called Christ. (Matt., I, 1-16.)

TO-DAY is the birthday of our Mother. The Church all the world over is celebrating the great Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Nine months ago to-day we observed the Feast of her Immaculate Conception in the womb of St. Anne, and to-day the Feast of her Birth into this world.

"Mary, of whom was born Jesus Who is called Christ," to-day's gospel says; all the glory of our Mother proceeds from that. That is why she is the Virgin of virgins; that is why she alone out of the whole human race was conceived immaculate and never touched by sin; that is why she is Queen of heaven and earth and purgatory:—because of her was born Jesus; because she is the Mother of God.

"And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus Who is called Christ." It is noticeable about this gospel of to-day, this "book

of the generation of Jesus Christ" according to His human nature, that it traces His genealogy and His descent from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through "David the King" down to St. Joseph, the virgin-husband of Mary, instead of to Mary herself. That is because St. Matthew, who begins his Gospel with it, was a Hebrew, writing in Hebrew principally and primarily for Hebrew readers. And in Hebrew genealogies the line of descent was never drawn through or to the women or mothers, but only through and to the men, the fathers and the male ancestors and male descendants. And St. Matthew in following this rule fulfilled his purpose just as well; because Mary and St. Joseph were both of the Tribe of Judah and the royal family of David, were at least distant relatives of each other, and thus would have the same ancestry. So St. Matthew, inspired by the Holy Ghost, proved for his readers what he wanted to prove, namely, that Our Lord Jesus Christ according to His human nature was a direct descendant from Zorobabel, Solomon, David, Judah, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham.

To-day is the birthday of our mother "Mary, of whom was born Jesus Who is called Christ." "Thy nativity," the Church sings to her in the Office of to-day, "Thy nativity, O Virgin Mother of God, announced joy to the whole world; for from thee arose the Sun of Justice, Christ our God: Who, loosening the curse, gave blessing and, confounding death, granted to us everlasting life."

The birth of Mary meant the birth of Christ. When she had appeared, Christ our Lord was soon to follow. Once she was born, it would be only a few years until Jesus Christ would be born. And that certainly meant great joy to this wretched, sin-cursed world and to all who were in it—or at least

to all in it who desired joy, the real joy, the joy that lasts, and who were willing to avail themselves of that everlasting joy by obedience of mind and heart and limbs—by believing, loving and serving.

So the great Church of Christ exults in Mary's birth and celebrates Mary's birthday; and we, the Church's members, most gladly celebrate Mary's birthday, for it is the birthday of our Mother.

EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

(Major—September 14th)

"Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself."

(Now this He said, signifying what death He should die.)

The multitude answered Him: "We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth forever, and how sayest Thou: 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this son of man?"

Jesus therefore said to them: "Yet a little while the Light is among you. Walk whilst you have the Light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth.

"Whilst you have the Light, believe in the Light, that you may be the children of light." (John, XII. 31-36.)

IN THE Church's year there are two feasts of the Holy Cross. The Feast of the Discovery of the Holy Cross by St. Helena, mother of the first Christian emperor, Constantine, is celebrated on the 3rd of May. And to-day, September 14th, is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross by the Emperor Heraclius.

The two events commemorated by these feasts were about three hundred years apart. St. Helena and Constantine her son built a magnificent church at Mount Calvary, the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher, and in it placed the holy cross, which St. Helena had recently discovered. But three centuries later on, a king of Persia, Chosroas, after subjugating Egypt and a large part of Africa, conquered Jerusalem (at that time the Roman city and "colony" of Aelia), destroyed the church of the Holy Sepulcher, and with other spoils carried off with him into Persia the holy cross.

Then Heraclius, emperor of Rome, took up arms against Chosroas, principally to recover from him Our Saviour's cross. It was only after fourteen years that he succeeded. When Chosroas, or rather his son, was forced at last to sue for peace, Heraclius made the restoration of the cross the first condition for granting it.

Shortly afterward with great solemnity and grandeur and in the presence of multitudes of bishops, priests and people, the emperor himself carried the cross from Jerusalem to Mount Calvary, there to exalt it once more where St. Helena and Constantine had placed it, on the spot on which Our Saviour died. And that is the event which Christ's Church celebrates every year on the 14th of September, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

In the gospel of to-day our divine Saviour alludes to the holy cross upon which He was going to die, and to the immense fruits in souls for God which His passion and death upon it would produce: "'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself' (Now this He said, signifying what death He should die)." He refers also in this

gospel to the final judgment and condemnation of this world and the complete overthrow of Satan, "the prince of this world," which His death on the cross would accomplish. "Now is the judgment of *this* world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out"; for His death was drawing very near; and with that death on the holy cross the victory would be decisively won, although it would take until the end of time to apply it and complete it in every detail.

By the humility of the cross He vanquished the pride of this world and of Satan, its prince. By the humility of the cross we must cling to Him and His Church, if we wish to share in His triumph.

The Emperor Heraclius so many centuries ago, carrying to its Exaltation the selfsame holy cross on which Christ had died, was mysteriously and miraculously halted at the city-gate leading out to Calvary. An unseen hand struck him as if with paralysis, and he could not move any farther. Then the Bishop of Jerusalem suggested to him that, clothed as he was in imperial pomp and splendor and adorned with gold and jewels, he was too little like Him Who had carried that cross over the same road to His own crucifixion. The emperor laid aside his rich robes and ornaments, removed even his shoes and, barefooted and clad with the poorest garments, took up the cross once more; and without any further hindrance or difficulty he carried it to Mount Calvary, and there exalted it.

On this Feast of that Exaltation let us renew our efforts and resolves to humbly imitate Him Who was "meek and humble of heart," and Who humbled Himself unto death—even unto the death of the cross—for love of us.

THE SEVEN DOLORS

(II Class—September 15th)

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother's sister Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen.

When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His Mother: "Woman, behold thy son."

After that He saith to the disciple: "Behold thy Mother." And from that hour the disciple took her to his own. (John, XIX, 25-27.)

IN THE Lamentations of Jeremias the Prophet, composed by the prophet under the inspiration of God the Holy Ghost more than six hundred years before the Crucifixion, Mary at the foot of the cross is prophetically alluded to: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow!" (Lam., I, 12.)

I think that to most people the crucifixion and death of her divine Son, with the sorrowful Mother feeble and helpless standing there at the foot of His cross, is the most appealing by far of her seven great dolors. And one of the sad features of this great sorrow or dolor was that exchange which to-day's gospel tells of—St. John instead of Jesus, the son of Zebedee instead of the Son of God.

The "Little Flower of Jesus," Blessed Theresa of Lisieux, sang most beautifully of this sad exchange shortly before her own holy death, in the last poem she ever wrote:

"Henceforth thy shelter in thy woe was John's most humble dwelling;
The son of Zebedee replaced the Son Whom Heaven adored.

Naught else the Gospels tell us of thy life, in grace excelling;
It is the last they say of thee, sweet Mother of my Lord!
But oh! I think that silence means that, high in heaven's glory,
When time is past, and to their house thy children safe are come,
The Eternal Word, my Mother dear, Himself will tell thy story
To charm our souls, thy children's souls, in our eternal home!"

It would probably be a story of long, slow, glorious martyrdom, most cheerfully borne and offered, for love of God and in resignation to God's most holy will—Ephesus or Jerusalem in place of Nazareth, John instead of Jesus, for many dreary years—for "from that hour the disciple took her to his own."

Let us learn from the sorrows of Mary to endure our little ones, whenever they come to us, in union with Mary—as the saints did—as, for example, Blessed Theresa did, the "Little Flower," with her own death drawing so near:

"Soon shall I hear that harmony, that blissful, wondrous singing;
Soon unto heaven, that waits for us, my soul shall swiftly fly.
O thou, who cam'st to smile on me at dawn of life's beginning,
Come once again to smile on me, Mother! the night is nigh.

I fear no more thy majesty, so far removed above me,
For I have suffered sore with thee!—Now hear me, Mother mild,
O let me tell thee, face to face, dear Mary, how I love thee!
And say to thee forevermore: 'I am thy little child!'"

So whenever we suffer, may we suffer with Mary. We all have to suffer more or less in this valley of tears. May our sorrows be united with the Sorrows of Mary, in brave and cheerful resignation to the adorable will of her divine Son!

ST. MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

(II Class—September 21st)

And when Jesus passed on from thence, He saw a man sitting in the custom-house, named Matthew; and He saith to him: "Follow Me." And he arose up and followed Him.

And it came to pass as He was sitting at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and His disciples.

And the Pharisees, seeing it, said to His disciples: "Why doth your master eat with publicans and sinners?"

But Jesus, hearing it, said: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill.

"Go then and learn what this meaneth: 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I am not come to call the just, but sinners." (Matt., IX, 9-13.)

THE PUBLICANS were tax-collectors in Judea and Galilee for the Roman Empire, or for its lieutenants and governors such as Pilate and Herod.

They were intensely unpopular with the Jews, hated and branded as public, notorious sinners, especially by the Pharisees, who would not eat with them nor in any way associate with them. Strict Jews considered it wrong for God's Chosen People to be paying taxes at all to pagans and unbelievers like the Romans, and considered it extremely wrong, and in fact like treason to God and Israel, to become a publican, a collector of these taxes. And then, besides, the publicans as a class, and with rare exceptions, were avaricious, corrupt, unscrupulous and dishonest.

St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist, was a publican when Our Saviour saw him that day "sitting in the custom-house" at his work, and said to him: "Follow Me." But he was ripe for conversion, because he immediately rose up and followed Our Lord. And with Our Lord's permission St. Matthew made a great feast for Him—it was in St. Matthew's own house, as St. Luke tells us (Luke, v. 29) —and, filled with zeal and with desire to induce other sinners, especially of his own class and calling, to be converted too, St. Matthew brought "many publicans and sinners" to meet Our Saviour at this feast.

"And the Pharisees, seeing it, said to His disciples: 'Why doth your master eat with publicans and sinners?' But Jesus, hearing it, said: 'They that are in health, need not a physician, but they that are ill. Go then and learn what this meaneth: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." For I am not come to call the just, but sinners.' "

Our divine Saviour is the Physician of our souls; and we all need Him, because none of us is spiritually "in health"; we are all ill spiritually or, in other words, we are all sinners. "If we say that we

have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," St. John wrote in one of his inspired epistles. (1 John, 1, 8.) We are all sinners, more or less; it is a question of degree, not of kind. And our most merciful Saviour, Who has come to call sinners, has come to call every one of us without exception.

So poor Matthew the tax-collector—Matthew the publican and sinner—in his prompt obedience to our divine Lord and his burning zeal, rapidly became St. Matthew the Apostle, and later on also the Evangelist, whose Feast the Church Universal celebrates to-day. He wrote the first of the four Gospels, from the ninth chapter of which the gospel of to-day is taken. He had great influence with his own Hebrew people and made many Hebrew converts; in fact, he wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, while the other three Evangelists wrote theirs in Greek.

Later on, St. Matthew spread Christianity far and wide, preaching Christ Crucified in Persia, Syria, Greece, Armenia and Ethiopia, where, according to the Roman Martyrology, he suffered his martyrdom for Christ.

May he intercede with his divine Master for us, who are sinners, as he once was, and who by the mercy of God will sometime be saints in the glory of heaven, as he certainly is.

DEDICATION OF ST. MICHAEL, ARCHANGEL

(I Class—September 29th)

At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying: "Who, thinkest Thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?"

And Jesus, calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them,

And said: "Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.

"And he that shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me.

"But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.

"Woe to the world because of scandals! For it must needs be that scandals come; but, nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh!

"And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire.

"And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: it is better for thee, having one eye, to enter into life than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire.

"See that you despise not one of these little ones. For I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father Who is in heaven." (Matt., XVIII, 1-10.)

IT IS the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, the victorious Leader of God's armies in the great battle in heaven (Apoc., XII, 7), where Lucifer with all his evil angels was forever overthrown. And in the gospel I have just now read to you, our divine Saviour refers to those great and magnificent spirits of heaven, in order to glorify the smallest and weakest of human beings on this earth, the innocent little children. Thus are all God's works, great and small, heaven and earth, angels and men, bound together in the most beautiful harmony and unity.

"See that you despise not one of these little ones,"

Our Saviour said. "For I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father Who is in heaven." They are more like the angels than we grown people are. Their little souls are white and shining with baptismal glory, at least until they begin to know right from wrong. And woe to him or her that smirches that glittering purity, leads them into evil, teaches them sin and scandalizes them. "It were better for him," Our Saviour said, "that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea!"

St. Michael the Archangel was the Leader of God's angels in that mysterious great battle in heaven which St. John alludes to in the Apocalypse. There is a constant battle on earth, that we know more about, where the demons aided by wicked men and women are struggling for human souls to imprison them in the everlasting fire, while God's angels are striving to win them for the everlasting happiness. If you scandalize, I won't say little children, but even grown people—if you lead them into sin, especially mortal sin, or make it easier for them to commit it—you are fighting on the side of the demons.

Self-mutilation is never allowed, because it is never necessary. The Church has absolutely condemned it over and over. But if it were necessary in order to shut off scandal or to avoid sin, which it never is, then the Church would withdraw her condemnations. In that sense Our Saviour said: "If thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. . . . If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee!" But there is always some other way; and our divine Lord knew that better than we do.

"Woe to the world because of scandals!" Our Saviour said. "For it must needs be that scandals come; but, nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh!" Woe to the writers, so common at the present day, who are writing against revealed religion or against good morals, in popular newspapers and magazines and in filthy or irreligious novels! Woe to the publishers who are issuing them! Woe to the actors in the rotten theatrical performances with which the stage is overcrowded and in those moving-pictures that are scandalous, to the teachers of indecent dancing and the musicians and the managers of those dance-halls where indecent dancing is allowed! Woe to the owners of all these machines of the devil! "It must needs be that scandals come; but, nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh!"

May St. Michael with his hosts of heavenly spirits be with us in the fight which we are constantly waging! "St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the battle! Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil!" May he safely guide us, through a world that is crazy with sin, to a world that is thrilling with unending joy!

THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

(Major—October 2nd)

At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying: "Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?"

And Jesus, calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them,

And said: "Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.

"And he that shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me.

"But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.

"Woe to the world because of scandals! For it must needs be that scandals come; but, nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh!

"And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire.

"And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: it is better for thee, having one eye, to enter into life than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire.

"See that you despise not one of these little ones. For I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father Who is in heaven." (Matt., XVIII, 1-10.)

THE CHURCH places this gospel on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, September 29th, and again in the Mass of to-day, the Feast of the Guardian Angels. The last words of the gospel are particularly appropriate to to-day's feast: "See that you despise not one of these little ones," Our Saviour says. "For I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father Who is in heaven."

We see from these words of our divine Lord, first, that our guardian angels, while performing their loving duties toward us upon this earth, never lose even for one moment the happiness of heaven, the Beatific Vision, the sight of God; and secondly, that we have guardian angels, not only when we

are grown up, but also while we are "little ones." In fact, the guardian angel takes charge of our soul at birth or before it. "How great is the dignity of the soul," says one of the greatest Fathers and Doctors of the Church, St. Jerome, "since each one has from his birth an angel commissioned to guard it."

In some ways the soul and its beautiful guardian are more akin to each other and more like each other while we are little ones than they are when we grow older. The baptized baby or child that has not yet come to the age of reason, is as free from sin as the angel at its side. When the disciples asked Our Saviour who was the greater in the kingdom of heaven, He placed a little child in the midst of them, and He said that whosoever should humble himself like that little child, "he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven." And He told them that unless they were converted and became as little children, they would not even enter into the kingdom of heaven. For of course nothing defiled can enter heaven; and therefore, partly on this earth perhaps and partly in purgatory, we have to regain with God's help the freedom and cleanness from sin which we had after Baptism, before heaven can receive us.

When God gives us our guardian angels, He gives us a sweet and most helpful relationship which lasts forever, unless we lose our souls. Even in heaven for all eternity we are still closely joined and united with our guardian angel. Up there we know them face to face. Here on earth we do not see them with our bodily eyes, but only feel sometimes and realize their presence.

They do all they can for us. It is not their fault if we go astray. They cannot interfere with our free will. God Himself will not do that. He made us

free and He leaves us free to the end. They can only influence our will indirectly by acting upon our intellect, imagination and senses in many ways of which we are unconscious. Many a good impulse of mind and heart comes from our guardian angels. Many a virtuous thought and desire is prompted by them. They defend us as much as they can from the spirits of evil. They protect us, even from temporal dangers sometimes, but chiefly from the horrible spiritual dangers that might wreck our eternity. They guard us and guide us and pray for us and love us.

And we should love them and should pray to them every day of our life. And we should praise and thank God for having given them to us.

THE MOST HOLY ROSARY

(II Class—October 7th)

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth.

To a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel, being come in, said unto her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women."

Who, having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.

"Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the

throne of David His father: and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever,

"And of His kingdom there shall be no end."

And Mary said to the angel: "How shall this be done? Because I know not man."

And the angel, answering, said to her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy, Which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.

"And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son, in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her, that is called barren:

"Because no word shall be impossible with God."

And Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word." (Luke, 1, 26-38.)

IN THE Rosary we go over the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary with its joys, its sorrows and its glory, beginning on this earth with the annunciation by the angel Gabriel, which to-day's gospel describes, and finishing in heaven with her coronation by the Most Holy Trinity as heaven's queen. If we recite the fifteen decades at one time, we tell the entire beautiful story from beginning to end without any interruption. But if we say five decades every day, then we go over the joyful parts of her life every Monday and Thursday; its sorrows each Tuesday and Friday; and the glorious portions on Wednesday and Saturday. In that case, the subject of meditation for our Sunday Beads would vary according to the season of the year—joyful from Advent's beginning until Septuagesima Sunday; sorrowful from Septuagesima until Easter; and glorious from Easter till Advent.

The Rosary is like a book, some beautiful, wondrous story, or rather history. You open the book and glance at the Table of Contents and you find

that it is divided into three Parts. Each Part has five chapters. The heads or subjects of the chapters most Catholics know by heart.

In the First Part, for example, Mary's Joys: first, the Annunciation by the angel (with the Incarnation which accompanied it—for as quickly as Mary said "Be it done to me according to thy word," the Word was made flesh in her womb); secondly, the Visitation (her visit to the elderly cousin who would give birth three months later to St. John the Baptist); thirdly, the Birth of Our Saviour at Christmas; fourthly, her Presentation of Him in the Temple when He was forty days old; fifthly, her most joyful Finding of Him in that same Temple when He was a Boy of twelve.

And in the Second Part, five chapters of sorrow: the Agony in the garden, the Scourging, the Crowning with thorns, the sorrowful Journey to Calvary in which He met His blessed Mother, and the Crucifixion where she stood at the foot of His cross.

And the Last Part, with its five glorious chapters: His Resurrection; His Ascension; the wonderful Descent of God the Holy Ghost Whom His Father and He sent to us to stay in us and in His Church until the end of time; and Mary's Assumption into heaven re-arisen from the dead; and, finally, her glorious Coronation as heaven's Queen.

But while our minds and memories are passing over this beautiful book so often in our lives, this Life of Mary, our lips are busy, too, reciting her praises, and even our fingers are occupied telling the blessed Beads. "Hail Mary, full of grace!" we are saying over and over. Gabriel said, "Hail, full of grace!", as if afraid to call her by name. She was his Queen, but not his Mother. But we do not fear to say "Hail Mary, full of grace!", ten times

to every chapter or decade; for if she is our Queen, she is our Mother too. And at the beginning of every chapter in the book we recite the Lord's Prayer, which her divine Son taught us; and at its close the "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost!"

For everything, of every kind and description, Glory to God! Whether it be for joy, or for sorrow, or for glory—always and everywhere Glory to God!

ST. LUKE, EVANGELIST

(II Class—October 18th)

And after these things the Lord appointed also other seventy-two. And He sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself was to come.

And He said to them: "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send laborers into His harvest.

"Go: behold, I send you as lambs among wolves.

"Carry neither purse nor scrip nor shoes; and salute no man by the way.

"Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: 'Peace be to this house':

"And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall return to you.

"And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have. For the laborer is worthy of his hire. Remove not from house to house.

"And into what city soever you enter and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you;

"And heal the sick that are therein; and say to them: 'The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.'" (Luke, x, 1-9.)

BY "the kingdom of God" Our Saviour meant the great Church which He was founding—what we now call the Roman Catholic Church; and indirectly He also referred to heaven, for which that Church's members are qualifying upon this earth and into which they will enter with God's help after they have left this earth. "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you"; for at last this great Church, promised and prophesied for so many centuries, was on this earth and at their doors.

St. Luke the Evangelist had a very large part in the spreading on earth of that kingdom of God. For he not only preached Christ Crucified himself all the years of his life and in many different countries, but he also wrote under the inspiration of God the Holy Ghost the great third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, which we all preach for nineteen hundred years now, and will preach to the end of time. More than one-quarter of the New Testament was written by St. Luke.

Our divine Saviour during His own adorable lifetime on this earth sent out His twelve apostles more than once on little missionary journeys in the Holy Land. And He also sent out His seventy-two disciples, as we have read just now in the gospel of to-day. As they were going forth He exhorted them with those beautiful words, which are quoted so often even nowadays to arouse us and move us in favor of foreign missions: "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send laborers into His harvest"; and He instructed them with those most beautiful instructions of to-day's gospel.

In all probability St. Luke was not one of these seventy-two. But he was a disciple of the great St. Paul and most closely associated with St. Paul in

his labors for many, many years. And he knew well St. Peter and some of the other apostles. And he knew well during her last years on this earth Mary, the Mother of God. According to traditions that have been handed down from very ancient times, St. Luke painted pictures of the Blessed Virgin, copies of which are still treasured in some of the churches of Europe. And from her own blessed lips he received those accounts of the Annunciation and the Visitation and the Birth of Our Saviour and His Holy Infancy which, inspired by the Holy Ghost, he has given to us in his Gospel.

He worked for Christ with voice and pen and every power of soul and body till finally placed in chains by Christ's enemies. He suffered his martyrdom in Greece. To-day on his Feast, and always, may he pray for us in his heavenly glory; and help his fellow-missionaries at home and abroad to extend and increase the kingdom of God on this earth.

ST. RAPHAEL, ARCHANGEL

(Major—October 24th)

After these things was a festival day of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem a pond called "Probatica," which in Hebrew is named "Bethsaida," having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved. And he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the water, was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under. **(John, v, 1-4.)**

ACCORDING to a common opinion of the commentators the "angel of the Lord" who "descended at certain times" into the "pond called Probatica" and moved its waters, was the angel Raphael; the Church herself seems to lend support to that opinion by placing this gospel on his Feast.

The Holy Bible mentions by name only two of the evil spirits and only three of the good angels. One of these two evil angels named in the Bible is Satan himself, the prince of the devils, whom the Bible in various passages calls by three different names: Satan, Lucifer and Beelzebub; the other is a very malignant demon named Asmodeus in the Book of Tobias. (Tob., III, 8.) And the three good angels whom the Holy Bible names, are: St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Raphael.

To-day is the Feast of this latter, St. Raphael the Archangel, whose very name means "the medicine of God," and who is invoked by many in times of sickness and disease. The inspired Book of Tobias in the Old Testament tells us about him. Tobias the Elder had merited highly of Almighty God. He had crowded every day of his long life with prayers to God and with continuous almsgiving and works of charity and mercy toward his neighbor. So when the misfortune of blindness fell upon him, God sent the Archangel Raphael down from heaven, "the doctor angel" as St. Augustine calls him, to cure his blindness and otherwise befriend him and his son. Tobias the Younger was the worthy son of this most saintly father. And the Archangel Raphael, clothed in human form and appearance, became his friend and companion for a time, guided and protected him on a dangerous journey into the land of the Medes, and brought him safely home again.

Then when father and son desired to reward him for his very great services by giving him one-half of all their wealth, Raphael directed their gratitude away from himself and up to the God Who had sent him: "Bless ye the God of heaven," he said; "give glory to Him in the sight of all that live, because He hath shown His mercy to you. For it is good to hide the secret of a king; but honorable to reveal and confess the works of God. . . . For I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord. . . . It is time therefore that I return to Him that sent me: but bless ye God, and publish all His wonderful works." (Tob., XII, 6, 7, 15, 20.)

"And when he had said these things," the inspired Book of Tobias continues, "he was taken from their sight, and they could see him no more. Then they, lying prostrate for three hours upon their face, blessed God; and rising up, they told all His wonderful works." (Tob., XII, 21, 22.)

Just as the archangel Gabriel so long afterward said to Zachary: "I am Gabriel, who stand before God" (Luke, I, 19), so the archangel Raphael said to Tobias and his son: "I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord." The archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are the only three of these seven, and in fact the only three of all the good angels, whose names we know.

Churches are dedicated for St. Raphael everywhere; he is invoked in the Litany of the Saints; the Church Universal celebrates his Feast every year on October 24th with proper Mass and Office; and with our Mother the Church we implore his intercession and assistance, at all times, but particularly in times of sickness and pain.

STS. SIMON AND JUDE, APOSTLES
(II Class—October 28th)

These things I command you, that you love one another.

If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you.

If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Remember My word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept My word, they will keep yours also.

But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake: because they know not Him Who sent Me.

If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin.

He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also.

If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin. But now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.

But that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their Law: "They have hated Me without cause." (John, xv, 17-25.)

ST. SIMON and St. Jude, two of Our Lord's twelve apostles, suffered martyrdom together in Persia. Therefore their Feasts are both celebrated on the same day, October 28th.

St. Simon was often called Simon Zelotes, or Simon the Zealous, partly to distinguish him from the great Prince of the Apostles, whose name was also Simon until Our Saviour gave him the additional name of Peter. This fact itself indicates the character of St. Simon the Apostle. He would not be called Simon the Zealous by his fellow-apostles and those who knew him best, unless he were filled

with zeal and overflowing with zeal for Christ his Master and the spreading of His holy religion.

Among the twelve apostles there were three pairs of namesakes, and three pairs of brothers. Besides the two Simons there were also two of the name of James, St. James the Greater and St. James the Less, and two named Jude or Judas—Judas the Traitor and the St. Jude of to-day's feast. St. Peter was a brother of St. Andrew; St. James the Greater was a brother of St. John the Beloved; and St. James the Less a brother of St. Jude, whose feast with that of St. Simon Zelotes we are celebrating to-day.

These two brothers, St. Jude and St. James the Less, were highly favored by God; for not only were they both called to be apostles of Jesus Christ and martyrs, but they were also both inspired by the Holy Ghost to write epistles which we have in the New Testament of the Holy Bible, the Epistle of St. James and the Epistle of St. Jude.

The Roman Martyrology tells us about St. Simon and St. Jude, that St. Simon preached the Gospel in Egypt and St. Jude in Mesopotamia. Afterward they joined each other and together entered Persia. And when they had converted to Christianity an innumerable multitude of the Persian nation, they suffered their martyrdom.

From the blood of the martyrs, penetrating into the earth like seed, sprang up as fruit an immense harvest of converts to Christianity and of souls for God, increasing the Church. "The blood of martyrs," Tertullian wrote, "is the seed of Christians." The apostles were martyrs, Sts. Simon and Jude as well as the others. They were fully prepared. They saw it all coming—the world's hatred of them—its persecution of them—their sharp and cruel suffer-

ings—and finally, the glorious death where they shed their blood for Christ. Our divine Saviour had prepared them for it, prophesied it to them, warned them of it over and over as plainly as He warned them in this gospel of to-day. "If the world hate you," He said to them the night before He died, as I have just now been reading for you in this gospel of Sts. Simon and Jude—"if the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember My word that I said to you," He said again: "The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." And He said to them: "All these things they will do to you for My name's sake."

So for His name's sake St. Simon and St. Jude gladly and joyfully laid down their lives, loving their Lord and Master even to the shedding of their blood for Him. May they pray for us that we may love Him too and persevere in His love to the end, as St. Jude wrote for us in his inspired Epistle: "But you, my beloved, building yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ unto life everlasting." (Jude, 20, 21.)

ALL SAINTS' DAY

(I Class—November 1st)

And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain. And when He was sat down His disciples came to Him.

And opening His mouth, He taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land.

"Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill.

"Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake;

"Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." (Matt., v, 1-12.)

VERY great in heaven is the reward of the saints, greater with some than with others according to their greater meriting while here on this earth, no two of them just alike nor precisely equal. What a variety of glory and brilliance! What a marvelous, thrilling spectacle to feast our eyes upon! Let us trust that with every passing day and year we are drawing nearer to it.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." We must keep ourselves "poor in spirit." Even though you cannot be as poor outwardly as Our Saviour and His blessed Mother and His saints, you must be poor inwardly. Even though it is a duty for most of you to labor for money, own money, save money, in order to support yourself and those depending on you, and therefore a duty to keep, if you can, from being absolutely poor—

inwardly at least you must be poor in spirit. You cannot be attached to money, nor love it nor respect it nor give it any very high place in your thoughts and feelings. The world around us may glorify it and in some cases adore it; but Christians, even while using it and owning it and increasing it for a little while on this earth, must all the time inwardly despise it, and thus be poor at least in spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The saints were "poor in spirit," and for the most part poor in every way. They were meek, never yielding to unjust or immoderate anger; and therefore it is they, above all, who in the lasting existence "possess the land." They mourned much more than most persons on this earth, not only enduring, but seeking pain, grief and hardship for Christ's sake; and in heaven they are richly comforted. They hungered and thirsted after justice, more disgusted than we ever are with the rank injustice of this world; and now they "have their fill" and are rejoicing forever in the complete and perfect justice of God.

The saints were merciful; and they have obtained mercy. They were clean of heart; and they see God. They were peace-makers, they suffered persecution for justice' sake, they were reviled and persecuted and spoken ill of, untruly, for Christ's sake. Let us be glad and rejoice with them, particularly this holy morning on All Saints' Day; for their reward is very great in heaven.

And for our poor selves, let us continue patiently hoping, and looking forward to the time when we shall see them, and see God. We must first be clean of heart: free from mortal sin, of course; but also clean of heart in every way, even though it should

take a long or a bitter purgatory to cleanse us. "Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God."

ALL SOULS' DAY

(Minor—November 2nd)

Amen, amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.

For as the Father hath life in Himself; so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself.

And He hath given Him power to do judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

Wonder not at this. For the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God.

And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment. (John, v, 25-29.)

ALL that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God." Their souls heard it already at the moment of their death and particular judgment—as Our Saviour says in this gospel, "the hour cometh, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God"—but their souls are not "in the graves." At the end of the world, at the general judgment, their bodies, "that are in the graves," shall hear it also.

We pray for them to-day above all days. The Church Universal offers the great Sacrifice for them this morning three times over, in city cathedral, in village chapel, in every nook and corner of this world where she has a priest. To-day is their day, the greatest day of our whole year for the souls departed.

Do they expect All Souls' Day when it is approaching, and look forward to it and long for it? Of course, we do not know for certain, for the Church has not taught us. But there is a beautiful old pious belief of some Catholics, which holds that they do. It holds especially that from All-Hallows Eve, October 31st, all through All Saints' Day and night, and until the Masses are finished on All Souls' morning, the souls in purgatory, bringing their purgatory with them, throng this earth and crowd its atmosphere, so that you could not walk ten steps anywhere without pushing through them, invisible, of course, and imperceptible to bodily eyes and senses, as spirits are.

They want to see if they will be remembered. The Church is praying for every one of them. But they want to see if individual Catholics are praying for them too. They want to see if those who used to love them before they died, still love them; and are doing all that loving hearts can do to bring them out of their purification and suffering into the spotless cleanness of the everlasting joy.

They can do nothing for themselves. The time of meriting has passed for them. The night has fallen upon them, wherein, as our divine Saviour said, "no man can work." (John, IX, 4.) They are utterly helpless in their intense suffering, and entirely dependent upon the mercy of God, the intercession of the angels and saints in heaven, and the prayers, almsdeeds, mortifications, indulgences and Masses above all, offered for them upon this earth. It is probable that they can help us and pray for us. But they certainly cannot advance themselves even one step toward the heaven which they so ardently long for.

Neither can they recede from it or go farther

away from it. They cannot go backward. They cannot sin. They cannot commit even the slightest venial sin—no fear and no possibility that they will ever again displease Almighty God. They are confirmed in grace. They are "the holy souls" and most dear to God; but they must be cleansed by the purifying fire from every slightest stain of defilement before they can enter into His all-holy Presence.

Ordinarily, as we know well, they cannot come back to earth to appeal to us. If they sometimes have done so, it has only been in rare and exceptional cases where, for some reason unknown to us, it has pleased God to allow it. But we can picture them trusting and hoping that, even without such special appeal, we will aid them. Let us not disappoint them. Let us make this All Souls' Day memorable for them and for ourselves by beginning from to-day to redouble our charity and loving-kindness toward the holy souls.

DEDICATION OF THE ARCHBASILICA OF OUR SAVIOUR

(II Class—November 9th)

And entering in, He walked through Jericho.

And, behold, there was a man named Zacheus who was the chief of the publicans; and he was rich.

And he sought to see Jesus who He was, and he could not for the crowd, because he was low of stature.

And running before, he climbed up into a sycamore tree that he might see Him; for He was to pass that way.

And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, He saw him and said to him: "Zacheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house."

And he made haste and came down, and received Him with joy.

And when all saw it, they murmured, saying that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner.

But Zacheus, standing, said to the Lord: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold."

Jesus said to him: "This day is salvation come to this house: because he also is a son of Abraham.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke, XIX, 1-10.)

THE first church ever consecrated was the Lateran Basilica in Rome, called by its strictly proper title, the Archbasilica of Our Saviour, in to-day's Mass and Office. It is the Cathedral Church of the Bishop of Rome, our Holy Father the Pope.

Constantine, the first Christian emperor of Rome, proclaimed freedom of worship for Christians about three hundred years after Christ. Then the Church, with Pope St. Sylvester at its head, came up from the Catacombs into the light of day. Constantine gave and dedicated to religion a large portion of his own Lateran palace. And there Pope St. Sylvester publicly and solemnly consecrated his cathedral church. It was on November 9th, more than sixteen hundred years ago. It was a great event, not only for Rome, but for the Church Universal—the first church ever consecrated, the first Christian altar, probably, ever anointed with holy chrism. It is still a great event to look back to; and all over the world every year, its anniversary, November 9th, is solemnly celebrated as a double-feast of the second class.

"This day I must abide in thy house," our divine Saviour said to Zacheus, the chief publican of Jericho, in to-day's gospel. And just as truly our

divine Lord abides in *that* house, the Lateran Basilica; and not only there in that "head and mother of all the churches," as it is so often called, but also in every Catholic church all the world over; and not only "this day," the day of their consecration, but every day of all the years or centuries during which they continue to be used as churches. He is always there day and night, under the appearances of bread, in their tabernacles. "And I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel, and will be their God." (Exod., XXIX, 45.)

"This day is salvation come to this house," Our Saviour said again to Zacheus. "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." In His great work of salvation, which progresses steadily through all the centuries to the end of time, what instrument of Our Lord, next to the bishops and priests themselves, is more important and useful than His churches, with their altars and tabernacles? The church is the house of God and the gate of heaven. Other buildings are for temporal purposes of one kind or another, for business that is transient and passes away. The church is for affairs that last.

Rightly, therefore, and most becomingly does our holy religion celebrate as a solemn feast the anniversaries of the consecration of its churches. If the parish church is consecrated, the anniversary of its consecration is a double-feast of the first class with an octave, for that parish. Similarly, the entire diocese celebrates the consecration-anniversary of its cathedral. And to-day, and every year on November 9th, the whole Catholic world celebrates the anniversary of the consecration of the Pope's Cathedral, the Archbasilica of Our Saviour at Rome.

May that Saviour, Who came "to seek and to save that which was lost," bless and prosper forever the grand work which the multitudes of His shepherds are accomplishing in His churches!

DEDICATION OF THE BASILICAS OF STS. PETER AND PAUL

(Major—November 18th)

And entering in, He walked through Jericho.

And, behold, there was a man named Zacheus who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich.

And he sought to see Jesus who He was, and he could not for the crowd, because he was low of stature.

And running before, he climbed up into a sycamore tree that he might see Him; for He was to pass that way.

And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, He saw him, and said to him: "Zacheus, make haste and come down: for this day I must abide in thy house."

And he made haste and came down and received Him with joy.

And when all saw it, they murmured, saying that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner.

But Zacheus, standing, said to the Lord: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold."

Jesus said to him: "This day is salvation come to this house: because he also is a son of Abraham.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke, XIX, 1-10.)

TO-DAY, November the 18th, is an anniversary of the dedication of St. Peter's Church in Rome, a feast which takes precedence of the Sunday in Mass and Office whenever it falls on a Sunday, as it does this year.

The Church places in the Mass of this feast the gospel that I have just now read to you, probably on account of those words of Our Saviour: "This day I must abide in thy house"; but still more because of those other words toward the end of the gospel. "This day is salvation come to this house . . . for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Our divine Saviour abides in St. Peter's at Rome and in every other Catholic church, no matter how humble, all the world over, not only on the day of dedication, but also on all other days through all the years and centuries. Day and night, under the appearances of bread, He is present in their tabernacles from the very first day that they are set apart for the divine services, as truly as He was present in the house of Zacheus long ago when He said to him: "This day I must abide in thy house."

Zacheus was a small man physically. He was so short that he could not see our divine Lord over the shoulders of the crowds around Him; so he ran ahead of the crowd, as a little boy might do, and climbed a tree to look down upon Him as He passed. Physically Zacheus was small, but spiritually there was something large about him. The great humility and simplicity which his words and actions showed, his liberality to the poor, to whom he kept giving away a full half of his large income, his restoring four times over, whatever he had wronged anybody in his past life, and his intense desire and longing to see and meet with our divine Saviour—all would indicate that Zacheus, although small in body, was large in soul.

We are celebrating to-day the feast of the largest church in the world. St. Peter's is nearly nine

hundred feet high, from the pavement to the pinnacle of the cross on the dome. Our churches we consider quite large when they are one hundred or one hundred and twenty feet long; but St. Peter's is nine hundred feet high. One hundred and seventy-six years it took to build it, and it cost forty-eight million dollars. Four hundred and eighty million would not build it nowadays.

But the same Lord and God, Jesus Christ, Who dwells night and day in St. Peter's, also dwells night and day in the smallest and humblest of our churches and chapels. "'Zacheus, make haste and come down: for this day I must abide in thy house.' And he made haste and came down, and received Him with joy."

Oh, what joy should we Catholics not feel in our churches! With what pride and love should we hasten toward the house of God in our midst, our heart leaping forward more quickly than our feet can walk or run, to where the little red light, twinkling constantly through the centuries, points out the Real Presence of Our Saviour. To the truly Catholic heart the church is the center of earth, the gate of heaven, the house of salvation and mercy. Not only on the day of dedication "is salvation come to this house," but on all days afterward as well. "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

THE END

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Printed by Benziger Brothers

252.1
M 147
35707
McDONOUGH, MICHAEL V.
AUTHOR
Three-Minute Homilies
TITLE
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